Vol. XI., Nos. 5 & 6. SEPTEMBER, 1921.

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

A monthly Magazine to maintain the cause of
TRUTH, FREEDOM, and COMPREHENSIVENESS
in the Church of England.

EDITOR: H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE NUMBER.

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OXFORD: BASIL BLACKWELL, 49 BROAD STREET

Conference Number, 3/6 net. Annual Subscription, 10/6.

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

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THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

Nos. 5 & 6. SEPTEMBER, 1921. Vol. XI

THE MODERN CHURCHMEN'S CONFERENCE OF 1921

By the Editor.

THIS number of the *Modern Churchman* contains all the papers read at the Girton Conference, with the exception of one brief evening paper which we were unable to obtain in time for publication owing to its author being abroad. These are published substantially as delivered. It is important to state this, since some of the Press reports of the Conference provoked a storm of criticism, both in the Press and Pulpit. Many of these reports were examples of intelligent and conscientious journalism, but others were obviously intended by their scare headlines and citations of passages, apart from their context, to provide sensation rather than information.

I.

The Conference subject, 'Christ and the Creeds,' is at present no easy one for students to treat publicly if they wish to speak fearlessly and conscientiously, and yet constructively. That there should be some criticism of the papers was not therefore surprising. It would be idle to pretend that all the views expressed at Girton are in harmony with popular orthodoxy, or even with traditional orthodoxy. All that those who expressed them could hope is that they may be in harmony with progressive orthodoxy. There is an orthodoxy which by becoming stagnant can become heresy, just as there is a religious devotion which, by refusing to become intelligent and moral, can become superstition. The Girton Conference speakers were more concerned to adjust their orthodoxy to the orthodoxy of the future, than to harmonize it with the orthodoxy of the past.

We believe, however, that every fair-minded reader will recognize the effort of the Girton Conference to be constructive and not destructive. This constructive character may be observed :

(*a*) In the note of affirmation which runs all through the Christological papers. There is evident in them a clear desire to be positive and practical so far as the claims of criticism and the technical character of the subject permit.

(*b*) In the inability of the readers of the papers as a whole to accept Professor Lake's conclusions (in his *Landmarks of Early Christianity*) as to the character and contents of our Lord's teaching or his estimate of our Lord's personality. Both were held to be historically unjustifiable and psychologically inadequate. The Liberalism which Prof. Lake jettisons may be alleged to have stript our Lord of His miraculous characteristics, but it left Him His moral and spiritual supremacy. But Prof. Lake's conclusions seem to deprive Him of the latter as well as of the former.

But though the Conference leaders strove to be constructive, it is clear that some of their statements must arouse controversy. It is because of this that we venture at the outset to offer some suggestions which, if heeded, can make future discussion really helpful. Let it be understood that modern Churchmen are ready to admit their liability to error, provided that traditionalist Churchmen will not claim infallibility, but will base their arguments on reason instead of on ecclesiastical authority. St. Luke commends the Jews of Beroea as more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily to see if the apostolic message were true. The Church of England claims that her doctrine can be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture, and also that what cannot be read in the Scriptures nor be proved by them is not necessary to salvation. But it is needful to remember that modern advances in knowledge have led us to modify our views of what constitutes a valid Scripture proof. One of our great difficulties in conducting a discussion on doctrinal matters with some traditionalists is that they have an entirely different estimate of the evidential value of certain passages of Scripture from that which modernists have. In some cases your traditionalist will cite the Pseudo-Mark (*Mark* xvi, 9 to end) as of equal historical value with the rest of the Gospel. In other cases he will cite passages from our Lord's speeches in the Fourth Gospel as of equal historical value with the speeches in St. Mark or in 'Q.' In other cases he will cite speeches and incidents in the source peculiar to the First Gospel as of equal authority with those attested by the source common to the Synoptists. In any Christological discussion it is crucial for the disputants to have come to some agreement about the Fourth Gospel, otherwise any hope of mutual understanding becomes impossible. It is hard to speak of the Fourth Gospel except in superlatives. It is the great Modernist Gospel of the New Testament. It translates Jewish Messiahism into terms which are universal and eternal, but the modern critical student of the Gospel may not cite its discourses as the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. They are the product of the Christian experience and the theological reflection of a disciple. The Fourth Gospel tells us what the Johannine Christology is, but we must go to earlier sources if we wish to know whether this is the Christology of Jesus. Unless, therefore, those who discuss together the theme of 'Christ and the Creeds' have adopted *modern methods* in the study of the New Testament (we do not say *recent conclusions*), no possible agreement can be reached and little good can be done by discussion.

But besides agreement in the *historical* method of studying the New Testament, there is another important *desideratum*. It is the besetting sin of theological controversialists to strive to condemn any new view not primarily on the ground that it is false but on the ground that the Church has already condemned it in some General Council fourteen hundred years ago. This facile method of appending antique labels to theological theories that are the outcome of modern criticism, and then feeling that

we have done our duty by them, may not only lead us into error, but too easily encourage in us that self-complacency of spirit which Lamb thought he detected in Wordsworth when he said that Wordsworth wrote an Ode to Duty and then considered that he was done with that subject. Not so lightly may the new theories be dismissed. They are not exactly the same as the old. If, as Renan wrote: *La verité consiste dans les nuances,* the new views must be carefully examined, and if rejected they must be rejected on their own demerits, because they can be proved to be false and harmful, and not because they are akin to some ancient heresy. Moreover if, as Lowell wrote: 'New truth makes ancient good uncouth,' the converse may also be true. At any rate, we would urge our critics to adopt the controversial ideal of the judicious Hooker and be more ready to show us *why* we are wrong than to tell us that we are wrong; they will then earn our respect and, it may be, our agreement. This request of ours is not altogether superfluous. The recent attacks, made even by men of eminence, upon the views put forth in some of the Conference papers on the strength of very abbreviated reports of them, suggest more anxiety to prove the Conference readers wrong than to show why they are wrong. This controversial method, the product of the *odium theologicum,* can do nothing but harm. If the Church will but conduct its controversies in a large and reasonable way, it will do much to retain, or rather we fear we must say regain, the respect of the nation.

There is one other *desideratum.* Just as it is not sound to put an ancient label on a modern theory, and reject it because of its likeness to that ancient heresy, so also it is not sound to argue that the theory cannot be true because it is *anticipated* that its practical effects will be detrimental to moral and spiritual life. There are beliefs which are not susceptible of logical, but only of experimental, proof; but no one has any right before the experiment has been made to affirm that such are false. Some years ago the writer read a paper on Modernism to a well-known Clerical Brotherhood. After the paper some spoke in this wise and some in that, and then one arose and spoke briefly as follows:

> 'I do not ask whether the views put forward in this paper are true or false, but what I must ask is this: If these views are true, what is to become of us?'

Truth is never reached by that method. It is a truism to say that Truth must be accepted in scorn of consequences, and that to look hard at consequences, or rather at the anticipated consequences, is the simplest way of blinding our eyes to Truth.

It may seem unnecessary to draw attention to these *desiderata,* but as a Christological controversy is impending, if not in progress, we shall do well to guard against those controversial methods which have made certain notable theological disputations a by-word for injustice and obscurantism.

II.

The present situation demands, moreover, that we should realise clearly what are the points at issue, as already serious misapprehension has arisen about them. It has been widely stated in Press and Pulpit that modern Churchmen at Girton denied the Divinity of Our Lord and declared Him to be 'a mere man.' This is most certainly not the case. No statement of this kind was made in any of the Conference papers, nor maintained in any discussion. Modernists have no quarrel with the Creed when it speaks of Jesus as being of one Substance with the Father, and as possessing both a Divine and a Human Nature. All would confess that in Jesus is beheld *Deitas sub specie humanitatis.* The question

discussed was this: What is the relation of the Divine Nature to the Human Nature in Jesus, and what do we mean precisely when we ascribe Divinity to Jesus? The leaders of the Conference were agreed in their answer that the Deity of Jesus is to be seen in His perfect Humanity.

This conclusion we believe to be the outcome of two convictions wherein may be found the real cause of the lack of agreement between modernists and traditionalists:

(1) The first conviction is this, that there is not a vast gulf between the Divine Nature and Human Nature. God and Man are akin. This thought should not seem strange to those who have read in *Genesis* that man is created in the image of God, and who find that no unimportant part of the Gospel of Jesus is its unveiling to men of their Heavenly Father. The New Testament is radiant with such declarations as these: 'Ye are the children of the Highest,' 'Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He (Jesus) Himself likewise took part of the same,' 'Beloved, now are we children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' Such passages as these declare the kinship between the Divine Father, the Divine Son, and Humanity.

It is this conviction of the close relation of Deity to Humanity which alone makes the Incarnation credible to the modern man. Jesus reveals this relationship, and He also renders possible the attainment of the ideal of Divine Sonship by every man. We, human beings, have the ineffable and incomprehensible privilege of being potentially sons of God, and of becoming 'fellow-heirs with Christ,'[1] and finally of sharing in all the πλήρωμα of the Divine Nature.[2] This does not mean that these things are fully ours now, or can be so in the future without an immense process of purification, illumination and development. This Divine Sonship is ideal, not actual. To sit on thrones with Christ in His Kingdom, is won by sharing in His Baptism and drinking of His Cup—all that is symbolised by the two great rites of the sacred society—but for many the privilege will not seem worth the pains.

But Jesus does not unite to God those who are by nature *different* from Him, but those who are essentially partakers of the Divine Nature. Hence while the modern Churchman is in agreement with the Chalcedonian Declaration when it affirms that the Father and the Son are of the same Substance, and that in Christ the Godhead and the Manhood are 'perfectly' united, he differs from the Chalcedonian Fathers by holding that 'the Substances' of the Deity and of the Humanity are not two, but one. Perfect Humanity is Deity under human conditions.

(2) The second conviction is this, that God reveals Himself to man not through the abnormal, but through the normal. With the eye of faith God is seen not through 'the chinks in His universe,' but in the universe as a whole, and supremely in human personality. God does not reveal Himself (as a pre-scientific and pre-critical age supposed) in miracles which are *contra naturam*. When this declaration is made, it is usual to charge the modernist with not believing in the supernatural. He does believe in the supernatural, but it is a *non-miraculous supernatural*, and not the *miraculous supernatural* of many traditionalists. The modernist is no 'irruptionist.' He believes that God enters into human life, but not that He enters into it in a cataclysmic fashion. Not by thunder, fire and storm is He revealed to us, but by the still, small voice in the awaking consciousness of man. Not in those narratives of the miraculous by which early Christian tradition attempted to present

[1] Rom. viii. 17. [2] Eph. iii. 19.

the wonder of the personality of Jesus is His Deity seen. Not in a super-human birth, not in a super-human death which rent the earth and veiled the sun, but in the moral and spiritual majesty of His personality is the true Nature of the Father revealed.

It is these two convictions which lead the modernist to believe in a perfectly human and non-miraculous Christ, but yet a Christ no less truly Divine. And the modernist holds that in the light of modern historical and scientific research this Gospel of the Divine Humanity is not only more credible to the modern mind, but presents a more adequate conception of the Incarnation than does the mediaeval view.

We cannot disguise the fact that to many there will seem to be elements of loss as well as of gain in this Christology. For us the gain seems incomparably greater than the loss, and we believe that a careful examination of Christian psychology, particularly as developed in the mystic experience of the saints, will show that this ' one-ing ' has been the basis of their vision and their victory.

The following quotations from Julian of Norwich are typical of the deepest spiritual experience :

> ' For soothly I saw that our Substance is in God.'
>
> ' For till I am Substantially oned to Him, I may never have full rest.'[3]

To us this Christology seems simple and attractive, but it may be urged that this is only so because it ignores various difficulties. Two such difficulties may be briefly touched upon :

(1) *' The view that the difference between God and man is one of degree and not of kind must inevitably land us in Pantheism.'* We cannot deal with this objection at length in the brief space at our disposal, but would refer our readers to Prof. Pringle-Pattison's notable Gifford Lectures, *The Idea of God in the light of Recent Philosophy.* He provides convincing proof that a belief in the kinship of God and man can be held in a form which is in strong opposition to Pantheism, although if loosely held by shallow thinkers it may easily degenerate into a conception of the Divine Nature which is as degrading to personality as it is detrimental to moral effort. Without the recognition of the Ideal, a doctrine of immanence must sink into a low form of Pantheism. Rigorous Christian thinkers, however, are saved from this danger by having their Ideal in Christ and by making Him the Standard by which they must judge of the Divine, and what is approximating to it or receding from it.

(2) Or it may be asked : *Does not this view diminish the religious value of our Lord by making Him in all things, except sin, too much like His brethren? Is not some of His uniqueness lost?* Such questions are natural. The view of the Incarnation we have outlined may seem, at first sight, to place too little distance between God, the Creator, and man, His creature, and between the Only-begotten Son and His weak and sinful brethren. But a not dissimilar objection may be urged against the doctrine that God is love. That is a doctrine full of danger. It may be hostile to religious awe, the very essence of religion. It may become a moral laxative. These objections are serious, but there are for the higher, though not for the less developed type of man, more than compensating religious and moral advantages in the doctrine that God is Love. Love seems hostile to justice, morality and awe ; but it is, for those who see it in its true light, the very essence of the highest form of these things and the greatest of incentives to them. It is quite true that this view of the Incarnation does not place so much distance between God and man, and

[3] *Revelations o Divine Love* (Methuen's edition), pp. 140, 10.

between Christ and man, as some forms of Christian theology have done, but the same criticism may be brought against the Gospel as enshrined in portions of the New Testament. The New Testament makes it quite clear (even if the Old Testament does not) that the human being is the child of God. The human being's defect does not lie in his essential nature, but in his weak and perverted will, in his failure to recognize his sonship to God, and, even when he has recognized that sonship, in his failure to live as a son of God should. This seems to have been the teaching not only of our Lord, but of all the great theological writers of the New Testament. Later Christian writers, with the exception of a certain limited number of mystics and philosophers, have for the most part shrunk back from these great assertions of the early apostles and theologians. They might say, with Justin Martyr, that every human personality is a *σπέρμα τοῦ λόγου*,[4] or with St. Athanasius that Christ became human that He might make men Divine,[5] or as is felicitously expressed in a very old Latin sermon: *Filius Dei efficitur filius hominis ut filios hominum faceret filios Dei*[6]—but owing to various practical considerations, as well as to a strong sense of reverence and to a painful sense of guilt, the ordinary Christian teacher has shrunk from proclaiming with clear consistency the fundamental and essential unity of human nature and Divine nature.

That Modernists should feel dissatisfied with the Christological formula of Chalcedon is not surprising. Many who would not care to be regarded as Modernists have experienced this dissatisfaction. The present Bishop of Manchester wrote in 1912:

> 'The formula of Chalcedon is, in fact, a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek Patristic Theology.'[7]

Canon Ottley in his Bampton Lectures points out that the weakness of the Chalcedonian formula is seen in its failure

> 'To recognize the *ethical* aspect of Christ's humanity as the unique archetype of manhood' (p. 429).

Dr. Du Bose, the American theologian, affirms that

> 'The immediate—and perhaps we ought also to say, the permanent—effect of the Council of Chalcedon was and remains a disappointment.'[8]

Dr. Vernon Bartlet and Dr. A. J. Carlyle sum up the situation admirably when they write:

> 'In a word, the General Councils, by rejecting premature theories, kept open the central problem of Christian theology for future days, when Christian experience and thought might be riper for its progressive solution.'[9]

This brings us to the practical question: Can the Christology implicit in the papers read at the Cambridge Conference find a home in the English Church by the side of the Chalcedonian Christology? In the little space that remains we address ourselves to answer this question.

III.

To every modern student of the New Testament whose eyes are not holden by a dogmatic tradition it is clear that there are at least three Christologies (or theories of the Person of Christ) in the New Testament: the 'Adoptionist' Christology of the First Church at Jerusalem, the Pre-

[4] *Apol.* II. c. 8. [5] *Orat.* I. 39, I. 30.
[6] From a 6th cent. Homily. *Journal Theol. Studies*, Jan. 1915.
[7] *Foundations*, p. 230. [8] *The Ecumenical Councils*, p. 256.
[9] *Christianity in History* (1917), p. 278.

existent-Christ Christology of St. Paul, and the Logos Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Primitive Christians were free to hold any of them or even to try to hold all three together, and yet remain full members and accredited ministers in the Church of Christ. The recognition of this fact enables us to draw at least two conclusions for our guidance in framing a Church policy for to-day.

1. The first conclusion is this, that there is no single Christology that is so authoritative that it alone must be held in the Christian Church, and which demands that the teacher of any other Christology shall be faced with the alternatives of recantation or deprivation. Will our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen venture to affirm deliberately that this is not so? It is not ecclesiastical authority, but the *consensus fidelium*, the growing consciousness of worshipping, practising and thinking Christians which must decide which, if any, of the competing Christologies is to become the dominant one in the Church's Faith. This is a slow process and in the best sense of that much misused word it is a *democratic* process, and may not rightly be hastened, circumscribed and usurped by ecclesiastical authority. The other method is not really Christian, but is an intrusion and inheritance from Byzantine Imperialism. 'Let both grow together until the harvest' is Christ's rule.

2. The second conclusion is this, that the restatement of the Christian Christology, when circumstances or rather convictions demand it, is permissible: in fact, more than permissible: it is obligatory on Christian teachers. There are few traditionalists to-day who would not affirm that the Logos Christology is superior to the Adoptionist Christology, yet it is clear that the Logos Christology is a restatement of the Adoptionist Christology. Nevertheless, that Logos Christology must have seemed to many an early (ἀρχαῖος) disciple a New Christology, and the Gospel which effected the restatement in the face of a growing Gnosticism was probably itself regarded by the Adoptionists as a Gnostic Gospel. Will our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen affirm deliberately that Christological restatement is not permissible and that it must stop where the Fourth General Council stopped in 451 A.D.? Should they affirm, however, that although permissible, it may not be lawfully achieved in a provincial or national Church before it be accepted by a General Council, then they prohibit practically all theological development or leave it to Rome.

If our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen hesitate to affirm that Christological restatement is wrong, and that it is not permissible to have more than one Christology at one time in the Christian Church, then they may reasonably put to us this question: Will you modernists tell us whether there be a fundamental or essential element in Christology which in your judgement is unchangeable, and if there be such an element will you tell us what it is? We should hasten to reply: The foundation of every Christian Christology is the conviction that there has been a supreme Incarnation of the Divine Nature in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. Every Christology has been based on that conviction and has developed from it. The *methods* of that Incarnation, whether by the influx of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, or by a Virgin Birth, or by an indwelling of the Pre-existent Divine Logos through a Supernatural but non-miraculous and evolutionary process, or by some other way yet to be revealed, are legitimate matters of historical research and of psychological and metaphysical speculation, but they are not fundamentals of the Christian Faith in the Incarnation.

Possibly the solution of such questions lies beyond the range of the human intellect. Philip Melanchthon, a man of no mean understanding,

and one who had given much thought to these problems took that view. The day before his death he wrote on a sheet of paper his reasons for wishing to die. They were as follows:

'Thou shalt say farewell to sin.
Thou shalt be free from miseries
And from the spiteful fury of theologians.
Thou shalt come into the Eternal Light.
Thou shalt see God.
Thou shalt look into the face of the Son of God.
Thou shalt learn the secret things too difficult to be understood here—
Why we are created as we are:
How the two natures are united in Christ.'

In conclusion, may we put two plain questions to our traditionalist fellow-Churchmen and to the whole Anglican Communion?

1. Will they accept the affirmation, 'God was in Christ,' with the practical recognition in daily life that 'Jesus is Lord,' as constituting the irreducible minimum for modernist membership in the Church and in the teaching and ministerial offices? If they will, then a Truce of God can be attained. But the question needs to be answered frankly and without delay, for upon the answer depends the Church's ability—

(*a*) to achieve Re-union at home;
(*b*) to build up a Christian civilisation in India and the East; and
(*c*) to win the love and loyalty of the rising generation of English men and women.[10]

2. Will they concede to modern Churchmen the right to modify the use of the Creeds and to produce, if they will, alternative Creeds for use in parishes where they are desired by the parishioners, provided always that this be done in a wise, loving and orderly fashion and with the authority of the Bishop?

These two questions simply mean this: Is the English Church to adhere to the doctrinal rigidity and liturgical uniformity of the Tudor ideal of Church government or is it willing to part with them in response to modern needs? In other words, does it propose deliberately to have a Church policy which can only be a poor imitation of the Tridentine policy of Rome, or is it going, in harmony with the essentially spiritual nature of the Christian Religion, and those ideals of freedom, progress and tolerance which are the heritage of modern Englishmen, to have done with the static conception of doctrinal uniformity and rigidity? It seems disposed to-day to grant in some directions a large measure of liturgical freedom: will it also grant a large measure of doctrinal freedom? Will it grant to its clergy, after proper educational preparation, genuine intellectual freedom and the right to teach with all sincerity their interpretations of the fundamentals of the Faith, provided always that they do it lovingly and reverently?

Many affirm, and with good reason, that to-day the pulpit has lost its power. One cause at least of this loss is that the clergy are regarded by the public as paid to teach beliefs only in the traditional forms, and if they teach otherwise are thought to have departed dishonourably from their contract. We need to break with this *damnosa hereditas*. If we do the cause of Christ in this land has everything to gain.

[10] The alarming statistics of Ordinations (ten years ago 640 deacons were ordained, last year 158) indicate that the youth of the nation are turning away from the ministry of the Church. The Principals of Theological Colleges are well aware that intellectual difficulties are an important factor in this decline.

CHRIST AND THE CREEDS

Opening Address.

By Canon M. G. Glazebrook, D.D., Author of *The Faith of a Modern Churchman.*

TWELVE years ago the Hibbert Trustees published a collection of essays by representative writers, belonging to various schools of thought, under the title *Jesus or Christ?* Though few of those essays are of outstanding merit, the presentation in one volume of opinions so radically different, yet advocated by men who bore the Christian name, awakened the religious world to a fact which had not been recognized. The central problem for us men of the twentieth century is the same which occupied men's minds in the fourth century. Like the fathers of Nicaea and Chalcedon, theologians of our day are being pressed by insistent demands to formulate an answer to the question: What think ye of Christ? It is not only in England that Christology claims the first place in religious discussions. The International Committee of Faith and Order has sent far and wide a series of four questions about the Creeds, the importance and the difficulty of which are largely derived from the same source. That is one of many indications that the more thoughtful part of the English-speaking world, dissatisfied with the traditional Christology, which dates from the fourth century, is groping anxiously for some more adequate expression of that faith in Jesus Christ which it shares with fifty past generations. In response to what seems a general desire, the Committee of this Conference decided to devote the whole week to various aspects of the subject which is in all our thoughts. Incomplete as our study must be in so limited a time, we may yet hope that by the papers which we shall hear, by our public discussions, our private conversations, and our joint devotions, we shall all be led towards a true and fruitful conception of Him whom we all worship as our Master and Lord.

But what need is there of any new formulas? Are not the old ones sufficient, which have been in use for some fifteen hundred years? The reader of a paper at the Anglo-Catholic Congress last year professed a perfect confidence that they were sufficient.

> 'The historic development of Christian doctrine was so guided and inspired by the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost, that the Catholic creed and conciliar definitions may be relied upon as representing the nearest approach to absolute truth which finite minds are capable of apprehending.'

This sentence seems to me to indicate that its writer has misconceived the whole situation. The men of each main period of human history have their own way of conceiving the universe—what the Germans call their *Weltanschauung*—which results from their experience and knowledge as a whole. The science, the history, the art, the travel, the social order of each generation, all contribute to what, for lack of a special term, I must call its philosophy. Now, just as an unlearned man cannot understand any statement until it is expressed in his native tongue, so a generation of men can understand any phenomenon only when it is brought into relation with the group of conceptions which make up its philosophy. And just as the Englishman's native tongue changes in course of time, so that our prayer book has become almost unintelligible to the mass of the present generation; so the scientific or philosophical explanation of any great fact, which satisfied the fourth century, is likely for that very reason to be rejected in the twentieth century as inadequate or unmeaning.

Now, the greatest fact in human history is the life of Jesus Christ, together with the permanent influences which have their source in that life—the moral standards, the spiritual experiences, the sense of a divine presence, and the hope of a blessed future, which have inspired countless thousands of His followers. From the day of Pentecost onward, the ever-increasing band of early disciples were irresistibly impelled to explain their wonderful experiences to themselves and to others, and each successive generation felt the same need. In attempting to describe Jesus, the object of their faith, they were plainly limited by the language of the current philosophy: for they could not go beyond it without becoming unintelligible.

Though some links are missing, we can trace the general line of the movement which led from Pentecost to Chalcedon.

The earliest disciples recognized that Jesus, who lived and taught and worked miracles, and died and rose again, was indeed a man, but yet more than a man. To express the higher element which they imperfectly perceived, they found a name in their existing vocabulary. It was Messiah, a title of indefinite import, which had long been appropriated to the superhuman being who was expected to regenerate Israel. That is how St. Peter presented Jesus to his audience on the day of Pentecost. He made no reference to the belief, held by many, that the Messiah had long existed as a spirit in heaven before His manifestation on earth: but St. Paul accepted that doctrine from the first. Jesus, for him, was the pre-existent Messiah, of whom the book of Enoch told. But soon His greatness was seen to overpass the limits which that name implied. St. Paul and the author of *The Epistle to the Hebrews* had recourse to the philosophy of Alexandrian Judaism, and identified Jesus with the creative wisdom of God, which had been described in *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*, and *Wisdom*, as an element in the divine nature, almost if not quite personal. The author of the Fourth Gospel, in his preface, followed the same thought further, though he preferred the equivalent term Logos. When he wrote: 'The Word was made flesh,' he ascribed to the Logos a complete personality. Thenceforward Christian tradition regarded Christ the Word as a second person in the Godhead, and gradually learned to place the Holy Spirit beside Him as a third.

The Greek apologists and the Fathers of the subapostolic time imported into the term Logos some of the significance which it possessed in the Stoic philosophy, with which they were familiar. This is specially noticeable in Justin Martyr, who teaches that the same Word which was incarnate in Jesus Christ is present in germ in every man of every nation. Stoicism ere long gave place to Neo-platonism. The Fathers of the third and fourth centuries, therefore, conceived the Logos in a more Platonic sense. It cannot be doubted that in developing the doctrine of the Trinity, and in particular of the Logos, they were largely influenced by the genius of Plotinus. We can

judge of the extent of that influence partly by its effects upon so independent a thinker as St. Augustine, who tells us that Plotinus converted him to Christ. So it is not wonderful that the language of Plotinus finds echoes in the Nicene Creed of 325, and in the so-called Creed of Constantinople, which was confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Observe the example which is set for us by the early Church. The successive steps by which the conception of the divine nature of Jesus was elevated and enhanced were determined, not so much by Biblical exegesis, as by the philosophies which reigned in succession—first Jewish, then Graeco-Jewish, then almost purely Greek. Of course Scripture texts were discovered which seemed to confirm the conclusions of philosophy; but he would be a bold man who should claim that the Christology of the Nicene Creed could have been developed out of the New Testament alone. When there are plainly several causes which contribute to a result, no one can say exactly how much is due to each. We must beware of the danger of exaggerating the influence of philosophy: but we must recognize that its influence was very important. Now, Plotinus was a very great man. His writings, in spite of their obscurity, have still a wonderful power to fascinate and inspire. But he is very far from having spoken the last word of true philosophy. Neither, as we believe, did the Divine Spirit cease to guide the Church in her search for truth after the fifth century. Theological speculation and construction ceased not long after Chalcedon, not because men felt that finality had been obtained, but because the barbarian invasions, which broke up the Roman Empire, put an end to all intellectual activity. The true successors, therefore, of the Fathers of the Church are not the ecclesiastics who for long ages held on to an unchanging tradition, but those who in recent times have applied the best modern thought in order to interpret the Divine Master to their contemporaries. Such were the great series of German philosophies from Kant to Lotze. Such are those in our own day who are steadily and reverently facing the task which the fifth century left unaccomplished.

The Christological speculation of the early Church had also another aim. Besides endeavouring to describe the divine

nature of Jesus Christ, men were impelled to enquire in what sense it was true that He was both human and divine. Here again we can trace the influence of current ideas upon their thought. The traditions of the ancient world furnished them with two types of beings who, in some sense, combined the attributes of divinity and of humanity. Each of these, I believe, is the ancestor of a long line of orthodox or heretical conceptions: but, like other ancestors, is only one of a number of contributory causes. If I seem to lay too much stress upon their influence, it is not that I imagine it to be exclusive, but because I believe it to have been under-valued or ignored.

The ancient Greeks and Romans paid homage to many heroes or demigods, who by their virtues or their services to humanity had attained seats among the gods of Olympus. When Horace wrote: 'Twas by such efforts that Pollux and the wandering Hercules attained to the heavenly citadel':

Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules
Enisus arces attigit igneas.

he expressed what was for his own circle a literary convention, but for the mass of the people a strong if subconscious conviction. Seeing what immense indirect influence the traditions of the masses exercise over theological thought, can we be surprised if the early Christians, although they were Jews by race and education, were disposed, when first groping for a formula, to follow the line which was suggested by Greek story, and in a measure by their own tales of Enoch and Elijah? At any rate, there are two speeches of St. Peter's reported by St. Luke which come very near to describing Jesus as a man who, by His good deeds, had achieved divinity. In the second chapter of the Acts we read:

> 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by mighty works . . . ye did crucify and slay. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which ye see and hear.'

Again in the tenth chapter:

> 'God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good . . . Him God raised up on the third day, and gave him to be manifest. . . . This is he which is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.'

No doubt there are Messianic elements here. But some of the Apocalypses represented the Messiah as beginning with ordinary manhood and achieving a superhuman power.

Nearer to Greek thought, perhaps, is a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews:

> 'Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.'

A still closer parallel is suggested by Justin Martyr's first Apology, written in the middle of the second century:

> 'By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, our Master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead, and to have risen again and ascended into heaven, we say no more in this than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove.'

Time and discussion, and especially the influence of the Logos doctrine, modified this early conception: and it does not appear ever to have been very widely held. But in the third century it was crudely stated by Paul of Samosata, who had a large following. He taught that the Deity of Christ grew by gradual process out of the humanity—ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γέγονε θεός. Again in the fourth and fifth centuries the same tendency appears, qualified and refined, in the teaching of the school of Antioch, especially in the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius. At the root of that controversy between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria, which so agitated the whole Christian world, lay the opposition between the developed forms of two pre-Christian conceptions of divine humanity. The one was that which we have been tracing: the other remains to be described.

Jews and Greeks alike had a tradition of gods who from time to time assumed the forms of men, but spoke and acted still as gods. Such was Jehovah when he appeared to Abraham and Sarah, when he inspired Gideon to rise against the Midianites, and when he met Joshua on the plain before Jericho. Such was Athene when she visited the wandering Ulysses, in order to advise and encourage her favourite hero. Such was Dionysus,

as represented in the Bacchae of Euripides, arguing with Pentheus and beguiling him to destruction. In all these cases the human body was a disguise which was assumed for the occasion and disappeared when its purpose was served. But legend told of one instance in which the disguise was worn for a considerable time: for Apollo served Admetus by tending his flocks for a whole year. Not even here, however, is there any suggestion that the human body was in any real sense a man.

The earliest disciples, being Jews, fully believed the Old Testament stories of temporary incarnation. They may well have thought it immaterial whether the duration was longer or shorter. 'Was it so very strange,' Dr. Sanday asks, 'that there should be some who thought that the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh was to be explained in this way? Was not the human form which He wore just assumed for the time?' It does seem strange to us, who are familiar with the problems of personality and will which were raised and discussed in the five succeeding centuries. But if we put ourselves in the place of St. Paul's contemporaries, who had not even imagined that such problems could be raised, we may find it natural for them to avail themselves of so well established a form of thought when they first tried to describe the dual nature of Jesus. In two passages, unless I am mistaken, St. Paul himself uses language which implies that view. He never writes with logical precision, and he is no more consistent than any other great prophet whose thought is always advancing. He may have held other views at other times. But surely when, in the first chapter of Romans, he distinguishes between the Lord's flesh which descended from David and His spiritual nature, wherein He was manifested as Son of God, it is hard to understand the flesh as involving mind and will and complete humanity. Again, in the epistle to the Philippians—'taking the *form* of a servant, being made in the *likeness* of men, and being found in *fashion* as a man'—the language, as Harnack points out, seems designed to exclude the notion of a real human personality. The tendency of St. Paul's teaching is often illustrated by the Fourth Gospel, whose author was largely inspired by him. And in several important passages of that Gospel—notably the fifth, sixth and seventeenth chapters—Jesus is represented as a

divinity in human form, but undisguised, speaking with an authority and claiming a position quite inconsistent with human nature. We all know that one development of this line of thought was Docetism, which was ere long discredited by its own extravagances. But the belief that the human form in which the Logos was incarnate lacked some elements of a complete human nature persisted until the fifth century. It is enough here to mention three names. Arius at the beginning of the fourth century taught that Christ's human body had only an animal soul, but not a rational soul. Towards the close of that century Apollinaris, an earnest opponent of Arianism, held practically the same view on this point, maintaining that the divine Logos took the place of the human reason in Jesus Christ. Both Arius and Apollinaris were condemned by Church Councils: but the particular doctrine in which they agreed coloured the beliefs of a vast number of the orthodox —not least in Alexandria, the special domain of Athanasius. When Cyril of Alexandria came forward as the champion of orthodoxy against Nestorius, he was in fact advocating an Apollinarian Christology, which had its roots far back in the ancient stories of Genesis and Joshua, of Homer and Euripides.

Cyril's victory at the Council of Ephesus in 431, though it ruined Nestorius and occasioned his death, did not really decide the main issue. The opposition between Antioch and Alexandria, representing the developed forms of the two pre-Christian conceptions of a divine humanity, was so much accentuated by a decision which was obtained by violence, that the Church was in danger of being rent in two. The Emperor and the Bishop of Rome, therefore, induced the Council of Chalcedon in 451 to accept a formula which was intended to conceal, if not to reconcile, the difference between the two schools of thought. That formula, which has remained the standard of orthodoxy, is thus rendered by Dr. Sanday:

> 'Christ is at once perfect God and perfect Man, of one substance with the Father in respect of His Godhead, and of one substance with us in respect of His Manhood, manifested in two natures without confusion, without conversion, without division, without separation, the distinction of the two natures being nowhere destroyed by reason of the union, but rather the separate properties of each nature being preserved, and yet running up into a single person and a single hypostasis.'

The Chalcedonian formula, though it was imposed upon an unwilling council by an autocratic emperor and an ambitious pope, did one good service: for it asserted the integrity and the reality of Christ's human nature. But while it commanded the consent of theologians, it was for centuries ignored by the masses, whose feelings and traditions were on the side of Cyril and Apollinaris. That is the significance of the form which the contention between Cyril and Nestorius took—a dispute whether the epithet Mother of God (θεοτόκος) was rightly applied to the Virgin Mary. For that epithet was already popular, and made a double appeal to the multitude. It harmonized with the Greek conception of a god inhabiting a human body, which was still predominant: and at the same time it satisfied the widespread craving for a real mediator to which the Apollinarian Christology made no response.

The latter reason is one which demands attention. During the third and fourth centuries, the combined influence of Greek tradition and Christological debates had gradually withdrawn men's minds from the historical Jesus. More and more Christ came to be regarded simply as a deity, while his humanity was either depreciated or ignored. Now a mediator—a high priest of humanity, 'who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities'—is what most men long for, nay, are determined to find. As they gradually lost the early conception of Jesus Christ which made Him a fit mediator, they turned more and more to another mediator whose humanity could not be disputed. As her Divine Son was removed from the sphere of real humanity, the Virgin Mary was promoted (not by decisions of councils, but by the pressure of the popular will, to which theologians yielded one by one) to occupy the vacant place. We see her gradually invested with such superhuman attributes as qualify her to be a mediatrix. She is pronounced by successive writers to be ever-virgin, free from all taint of sin, and a sharer in the work of redemption. She rises from the grave and ascends visibly to heaven, in order that she may plead for mankind. This process of development may be said to have received a formal recognition when the Council of Ephesus pronounced in favour of the disputed epithet, and the multitude, who had waited at the doors all day in eager expectation, filled

the air with joyous cries of *θεοτόκος*. From that time onward millions have worshipped her as the true mediator, both human and divine—Mary of the bleeding heart, Mother of God, and Queen of Heaven.

The controversy which for centuries divided and embittered the Christian world, was not really decided by the compromise of Chalcedon: it was merely brought to an end by the intellectual paralysis which followed the barbarian invasions. There is a danger, therefore—nay, a certainty—that it will be revived under new forms unless the cause of it can be removed. What is the cause? I think the preceding narrative suggests the answer, which I will try to state as briefly as possible.

Both parties to that long controversy were guilty of the same error; for both ignored an essential part of the revelation of Jesus. Whereas Jewish and Greek traditions alike represented God and man as belonging to two different orders of being, so contrasted and opposed that they could have no natural relation, Jesus affirmed that they were bound together by a real kinship. Thus He described the repentance of the sinner, not as a change of nature, but as a return to normal relations, an acknowledgment of the essential unity between the Father in heaven and His sons on earth. Surely it was a sense of that unity—and not a mere inheritance of eschatological terms from the book of Enoch—that enabled Him to speak of Himself both as the Son of Man and the Son of God. Did He not mean us to learn that He was in the highest sense a Son of God, not in spite of His humanity, but because His humanity was uniquely perfect?

Allow me to quote a few lines from one of the essays in the book to which I referred in opening. Professor Henry Jones writes, and they are weighty words of a serious thinker:

> 'There is not one element of Christian morality or of Christian religion which is not deepened through the recognition of the veritable unity of the divine and human nature, which is the essence of the idealism of Jesus. There is no element which is not weakened by whatever qualifies or compromises that unity. And that which is thus said of the relation of man to God holds of relation of man to Jesus. Indeed, we stultify the conception of the unity of God and man if we reinstate a chasm between Jesus and man.'

And again:

> 'The error [of Dr. Denney] does not spring from maintaining the divinity of Jesus, but from denying the divinity of man. Nor can

> it be corrected by maintaining that Jesus was a "mere man": the implications of that phrase are themselves profoundly erroneous, and unjust to man. The error lies in assuming an exclusive antithesis between the divine and the human: in shutting God out of the life of man, limiting his infinitude; and in rendering the nature of man secular and profane. It is the error both of the unitarianism of the past and of the theology to which it was opposed. It is refuted in the divine humanity of Jesus of Nazareth.'

May we not apply these words to the advocates of the two rival traditions which so long made discord in the early Church? Apollinaris and Cyril, no less than Paul of Samosata and Nestorius, ignoring the Lord's own teaching, adopted the pre-Christian assumption that an absolute gulf separated the natures of God and man. One cannot but admire the resolute logic and the harmonistic subtlety which enabled theologians to go on for centuries constructing new hypotheses and devising new qualifications or compromises. Yet, it is plain, the chief result of all their reasoning was to prove the unsoundness of their premises, which involved the reconciliation of opposites. The Chalcedonian formula was in fact an acknowledgment of failure. Exhausted logic allowed authority to impose a conclusion which was alien alike from the revelation of Christ and from the traditions of the ancient world.

For thirteen hundred years that conclusion may be said to have held the field. Even the Reformers of the sixteenth century did not challenge it. Indeed, having no system of philosophy, they could not attempt a new interpretation of the nature of Christ. That attempt was reserved for the early nineteenth century, when the genius of the great German philosophers had constructed a new metaphysic. Having neither the time nor the knowledge to trace the history of their great adventure, I will only venture upon two remarks. Hegel set the example of taking our Lord's own teaching as the basis of his Christology, and his English interpreters, Thomas Hill Green and the Cairds, had a vast influence upon the generation which is now growing old. But they were pioneers only, and have not led us through to the desired goal. Neither have their successors. Indeed, it would seem as if Christology in Germany had come to an end in the agnostic pragmatism of Ritschl; and the great movement of the nineteenth century, like that of the fifth, had led men into an impasse. That is

why the old controversies of the early Church, and the conclusions of the fourth and fifth centuries, are more familiar to Englishmen at large than are any recent enquiries. That is why I have ventured to spend so much time upon the debates of long ago, which still offer us both an example and a warning.

So Christology is the great problem for the theologians of to-day, and not only for theologians, but in a measure for all earnest Christians. The same wondrous Personality, which baffled the analysis of the Greek philosophers, challenges our understanding as well as our worship: and the events of nineteen centuries have given us a larger sense than they could have of its significance. Their example impels us to apply our best thought to the interpretation of the greatest fact in human history; while their failures warn us how dangerous it is to assume the validity of traditional conceptions. I am not here to offer any answer to the question which is vital to us all. I come in the hope of learning from those better qualified students who are to open our discussions. But I do venture to express my belief that, if we take the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation, and build upon it cautiously and reverently, our edifice of faith will be more secure than those which were partly based upon the sands of Greek or Jewish tradition.

Happily for most of us, philosophic thought and scientific analysis are not essential to the religious life. All through the centuries when these questions about the nature of Jesus Christ were being either fiercely debated or quietly ignored, vast numbers of His faithful followers, who knew nothing of definitions, were finding His words a lamp to their path, were inspired by the sense of His presence, and uplifted by the assurance of His reconciling grace. Differing from each other, consciously or unconsciously, in their conceptions of His person, they were and are united by sharing the experience of His power. We are at one with them. It is because we all live by the faith which experience guarantees that we place in the foreground of our Conference some of those things which are most nearly related to experience. For they too need to be confirmed and illumined by careful thought.

(α) The records of our Lord's earthly life, and of His later manifestation to His disciples, are fragmentary and mingled

with elements of legend. We desire to clear our thoughts about them, in order that we may have a reasoned assurance about that which is essential.

(β) Jesus claimed to be the Revealer of God. We desire to renew our conviction that He is such; and to understand more fully both the content of His message, and the means by which it was delivered—whether teaching, commandment, example or demonstration.

(γ) For all who call themselves Christians, the Person of Jesus Christ is a central fact. If, therefore, our faith is to be a whole, and not a group of fragments, we must bring all our religious beliefs, our rules of conduct, our hopes and aspirations and ideals, into relation with that centre.

When we have tried to do this, we shall be in the right mood to approach the mystery of His nature, the understanding of which would explain man's place in the universe, and the meaning of Christ's human life for each individual soul. Though we cannot look for a complete understanding, we are confident that sincere and reverent effort will not altogether fail.

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF JESUS?

By the Rev. C. W. Emmet, B.D., Fellow of University College and Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

WE are not now asking what we believe about Jesus on the basis of experience and Christian theology, but what we have a right to affirm as historians.

What do we know of Jesus? In answering such a question, there are always two sources of information to be considered. There are the records of the life, of whatever date or value, with which we may couple incidental references found in other writings; and there is the impact made by the man on his age, and the result of that impact in a school, a movement, or a Church. It may be hard to use this second source rightly; it will tell us rather of large tendencies and general features than of details, but to the historian it is a real source which enables him from the effect to learn something of the cause.

If this be true, we cannot, except for very special purposes, use either of the sources in isolation. This is clearly the case with the Gospels. It is not good history to take the first three Gospels and ask what we can make of their story on the assumption that the Crucifixion is the end. One of the factors in the problem to the most 'objective' of historians is that a unique movement took its rise from the career of the executed Nazareth workman, that for some reason the most astounding claims came to be made on His behalf by men who had known Him. How far these claims can be justified is a question for theology; that they were made is a fact for the historian. It is one of the things that he knows about Jesus, and no account of His career can be satisfactory which does not explain why these results followed from it.

Once more, there are two ways in which our subject may be discussed. (*a*) We may examine our evidence in detail, attempting to sift original fact from tradition. We may ask what acts, what sayings are authentic, what He actually said and felt about Himself, and sketch a resultant outline of the life. Such a procedure is obviously impossible in the time at our disposal, and it has the disadvantage of drawing away the attention to this or that disputed point. (*b*) We can ask what general impression we can gather of Jesus from our two-fold sources. What kind of person does He seem to have been? I venture to think that this method may be more suitable for the opening paper of such a Conference as this, and I propose to bring before you familiar but crucial considerations which it is well that we should have explicitly in mind in the discussions that follow.

One thing which it might be necessary to emphasize before other audiences, I shall take for granted here. We believe quite seriously in the reality of Christ's humanity and all that this implies. We also assume the modern method of approach to the Gospels, and take as our primary source the first three; the fourth is on a different footing. I really want to show, starting from this basis, that the ordinary man may trust the general impression of the personality of Jesus which He gets from the Gospels.

We may consider briefly some typical ways of approach.

(1) The traditional view reads back into the earthly career of Jesus the Christ of the Epistles, and even of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Whether this is justified is the question before us; we must not start by assuming it. The weakness of this way of approach is that it tends to make us think of Him as we might of a generous-hearted duke, who for a short time plays at being a working miner.

(2) What is known as the 'Liberal-Protestant' view lays the main stress on the teaching of Jesus, in which at its best it includes what He was and did. Sometimes it shows a desire to eliminate not merely the miraculous, but also the element of mystery and genius. It may think of Jesus as a very respectable miner, who afterwards becomes a duke. But if it avoids this danger, its way of approach is not far from the truth.

(3) The eschatologist sees in the historic Jesus one whose central and dominating idea was the immediate and catastrophic end of this world-age. This was the one motive of His own action and teaching, and it is the one test of authenticity in the Gospels. Gloss this hypothesis as you will, it none the less makes Jesus a one-sided fanatic, and implies that the sane and permanent element in the Gospels and in Christianity comes from some other source. It implies that the authentic element in His teaching was the commonplace, which was most in line with contemporary thought; while that which was novel, and unexpected and really epoch-making is the discovery of His followers.

These three views agree in thinking that the actual Jesus was one who counted.

(4) There is the 'Christ-myth' theory, which supposed that He neither counted nor existed. The historian may be forgiven if he does not trouble himself overmuch about a view which regards the man Shakespeare as a fiction invented to explain the existence of the plays.

(5) We have recently had put before us a view which suggests that, though Jesus existed, He did not really count. Drs. Lake and Foakes-Jackson appear to give us the picture of a very commonplace and uninspiring prophet, differing from the prophet of the Liberal-Protestant, in that He only taught much what other people had already taught, except for a few original

remarks which were either untrue or quite unpractical. He allowed His followers to address Him as 'Sir,' and He spoke of someone else as the Son of Man.

We can really gather little more than this from *The Beginnings of Christianity* and *Landmarks of Early Christianity*. None the less I stress the phrase 'appear to give us'; for I am confident that we have not here their full mind. They were dealing with certain problems in isolation, and there were other sides real to them as to us which they rather took for granted, and perhaps believed their readers were taking for granted as well. Still, their challenge remains, and in all friendliness we must accept it. The fundamental criticism on these books is that they fail historically because they make Jesus unimportant and uninteresting. Such a view explains neither the figure of Jesus as given us in the Gospels, nor the impact of Jesus on His age.

When we study the Gospels from the point of view of historical criticism, whatever else we get, we get the impression of an overwhelming personality. Mark's Gospel is a drama—it would be a thrilling drama if we were not so familiar with it—in which the opposing forces are the popularity and the hostility evoked by Jesus. Wherever He appeared, these at once burst into flame. He attracted tremendously, or He repelled tremendously. The Gospels witness to this on every page; they do not talk about the power of His personality, but it is there. Quite certainly when He was on earth Jesus was one who counted, one who made things different wherever He came.

Again, the miracles. We do not judge harshly those of our predecessors who, in protest against a gross and unreal conception of the supernatural, thought that the mighty works of Jesus could be almost eliminated from the Gospels. But now all those recent lines of research and experiment, which we sum up under the head of psycho-therapy, confirm in substance the stories of healing, of insight and intuition. They are no longer 'miracles' in any sense which sees in them evidence of a divine intervention working outside or above the laws of nature. The Tome of Leo, accepted at Chalcedon, sees in the miracles evidence of the divinity of Christ; in the sufferings evidence of His

humanity. If we are going to distinguish at all between the two natures, we should say rather that the sufferings appeal to us as in some sense the sufferings of God, while the miracles point to the power of a perfect humanity. How much of the actual narratives we can retain, in what precise terms we should describe the events if they occurred to-day, we need not pause to enquire. The point is that we have a solid nucleus of mighty works done on the soil of Palestine by Jesus of Nazareth. Wherever we find such phenomena, they always point to the existence of a strong, an incalculable, personality. Where they reach the climax, we are entitled to speak of the genius of that personality, a genius shown in a profound sympathetic insight into the woes of others, physical, mental, and spiritual, and in a power of removing them based on the response it awakens in the sufferer's soul. With the exception of one or two discordant stories such as the Gadarene swine and the cursing of the fig-tree, with which criticism is fully able to deal, the Gospel miracles, in strong contrast to those of the Apocryphal Gospels or mediaeval legends, show an absence of sensationalism and a purely unselfish desire to lessen something of the misery of the world, which make them a harmonious expression of character.

Once more, we are impressed by the method of self-revelation which Jesus adopts. We are able to trace this in Mark; it has been preserved in the story in spite of the obvious temptation to suppose that our Lord's message about Himself must have been clear and dogmatic from the first. On the contrary, according to Mark, He says nothing about His own place in the kingdom, but allows it gradually to emerge in the minds of His companions as the result of contact with Himself. In the question at Caesarea Philippi He puts the method to the test, and Peter's answer vindicates it triumphantly. It is the method of genius, leading the learner on to discover the truth for himself, not ladling it out ready-made in express dogmatic statement, to be accepted on authority. Jesus, by the intuition of genius, anticipates the explicit discoveries of the modern science of pedagogic. One who can do this is at least one who counts. And one whose personal friends find themselves compelled to describe Him

by the highest term known to them is something more than an impressive teacher.

Dr. Lake argues (*Landmarks*, p. 79) that it is a mistake to attribute the success of Christianity 'to the influence of the personality of Jesus.' He admits it was this which influenced His immediate followers and made them regard Him as Messiah and so forth, though we are bound to repeat that the Jesus he portrays does not in fact strike us as very impressive. 'But once the belief was established it became the foundation of the whole structure, and the personality of Jesus was quite eclipsed by the supernatural value attached to Him.' This is probably too sweeping a statement; Paul's stress on the love of Christ and (less frequently) the imitation of Him; sayings such as 'Whom not having seen ye love,' and the yearning prayer, 'Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus,' witness to something we may fairly describe as affection for a personal Jesus no less than devotion to an exalted Christ regarded as a Saviour-God. The New Testament writers would, indeed, hardly have understood the distinction between the two conceptions. It is doubtful whether the knowing Christ after the flesh (II *Cor.* v, 16) really implies such a distinction. And in some earlier words of Dr. Foakes Jackson[1]:

> 'Though the historic Christ in the early Church was at a later time somewhat obscured by the prominence given to the doctrine of "Logos," the inner history of the Church shows that the example of the historic Christ was never completely forgotten.'

None the less it is roughly true that a conscious emphasis on the attractiveness of the personality of the historic Jesus as manifested in His earthly life is comparatively modern. Perhaps its main impetus was derived from Francis of Assisi. But the fact remains that this personality, with its power and charm, is found in the pages of the Gospel. If it be the case that the early Church hardly realized its significance, that it was not part of its apologetic, we have all the more reason to trust the picture as historical. It was not to the interest of any party to imagine it. It appears in the Gospels almost in spite of the Evangelists, with their varying apologetic or ecclesiastical interests, not as the product of Church theology, but because it was part of the original fact.

[1] *Cambridge Theological Essays, Christ in the Church*, p. 471.

So with regard to some remarkable features of the personality. It is possible that we may be justified in explaining this or that title ascribed to Jesus as the naive reading back into the primitive story of conceptions arrived at later by the faith of the Church. But this cannot explain other features. The harmonious charm of the character of Jesus, with its combination of opposites which are usually regarded as incompatible, the suggestion of natural authority and power over men, the way in which He tacitly assumes a difference between Himself and others—witness the distinction between 'My Father' and 'Your Father,' the absence of any sense of sin or need of forgiveness, the general impression of perfection—all these appear subtly and inevitably as part of the web and woof of the story. They belong to the historical Jesus.

We need not be haunted by the fear that we read these things into the Gospels because we have been brought up to do so. Men of all types, including those who approach the Gospels with no preconceived Christian ideas, have in fact found themselves in the presence of a personality, which impresses and grips them. It is irrelevant to compare Hamlet or any character of fiction. These are the deliberate creation of a single mind. They live for us because they express the artist who drew them from his own living thought and experience. But the Gospels are the product of a process, not of any one creative genius. The personality which stands out in them can only be the outcome of an actual life lived among men. Your Jewish contemporary writings, your later Christian writings of the next two or three centuries, are voluminous enough; where they have survived they are for the most part known only to scholars and are studied not for their intrinsic merits, but for the light they throw on contemporary thought. It is sober fact that all of them combined have had not one tenth of the influence on the thought and the practice, the literature, and the art of mankind as those few pages of the New Testament. We need not be afraid that we are deceiving ourselves when we trust our own instinctive impression of the greatness of the Figure they portray. We always come back to the sheer fact of the Gospels, and behind the Gospels is the fact of Jesus.

'The personal fascination which He exercised (*i.e.* on his contemporaries) has renewed itself from age to age, and is perhaps stronger

now than ever; whereas the influence of others has inevitably decreased as time went on. This may be considered as part of the historic testimony to the divine nature of Jesus Christ.'[2]

Once more, it is not disputed that the figure of Jesus quickly attracted to itself all the outstanding conceptions of greatness and divinity current in the first century. A unique significance was attached to His death; it was believed that He had burst the bonds of death and was effectively alive. Why was this? How did Jews venture to speak of a fellow-Jew in terms which belonged to the divine? And why did that religion alone survive which regarded Jesus as Lord? The more we depart from the traditional view, the less stress we lay on external miracle, the miraculous birth or empty tomb, on direct claim or prediction on the part of the Master Himself, the more it seems to me must we ascribe to the initial influence of His personality, of His character and teaching, of all that He did and was: and, I would add, the more are we justified in believing that Christianity has not been mistaken in its conviction of His living presence. On this line, too, we get down to the naked primitive fact of Jesus Himself, as He lived and as He lives. Jesus was not portrayed as unique, because He was born of a Virgin or claimed to be divine; these things were ascribed to Him, whether rightly or wrongly, because in His actual life He was obviously unique.

But after all, as Carlyle reminds us, 'a man's religion is the chief fact about him.' Behind the character and the personality of Jesus was His religion, His immediate and unbroken consciousness of God—a feature which no student of the Gospels can seriously dispute.[3] And equally clearly it was His aim to pass this on to others in His teaching. I do not wish to anticipate unduly the subject of a future session, but in considering what we know of Jesus it would be absurd to omit the teaching. I find at the heart of it a new conception of God as Father. It is surprising that critics so acute as Lake and Foakes Jackson should have allowed themselves to dismiss this in a few lines as a commonplace which Jesus took over from contemporary Judaism. It is true you find sporadic cases in which God is

[2] Foakes Jackson, *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 478.

[3] 'There is an almost unanimous agreement among the most civilized races of mankind that no one ever approached Him in moral goodness or in knowledge of God' (Foakes Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 473).

spoken of as Father, but this is only one of a hundred different ways in which men thought of Him. Take a concordance of the Old Testament and later Jewish books and study the catalogue of attributes, most of them turning on His power, His omnipresence, His omniscience, His readiness to punish. Contradictory ideas are jostling one another for the chief place. Fatherhood and love are merely subordinate features amongst many others. Jesus did not merely reverse the proportion or change the emphasis. He drops all the other phrases; practically He calls God Father, and nothing else. It is so natural to Him to speak of God in this way that He has little or no use for the cautious periphrases, such as 'the Holy One,' 'the Blessed,' 'the Highest,' or the evasive terms by which Judaism avoided the direct naming of God. And with the new manner of speech does go a new sense of His accessible nearness, His unfailing love, His intimate relation to all men. It is a religious revolution.

And this feature of the Gospels is original not only in the sense of being new, but also as representing the most authentic teaching of Jesus Himself. It did not become the centre of controversial interest either in the different schools of the early Church or in Judaic controversy. Indeed, its full significance was hardly recognized, and it was overlaid by the combination with it of those incompatible Judaic elements which Jesus had discarded. I believe, indeed, that we shall come to see that it is precisely those contemporary ideas of the wrath of God and His ultimate avenging activity as destroying Judge which are the unauthentic elements in the teaching ascribed to Jesus. At any rate, there is in the Gospels a new teaching about God; once more we appeal to the common experience of mankind. This is one of the features which constantly impresses non-Christians who approach them with no preconceived idea of what they will find, and many, if not all, of the really fruitful movements in Christian thought have been inspired by the attempt to fathom more of the meaning of this original teaching and to recover its consistent simplicity. And this perennial return to the Gospels and to Jesus is not artificial or conventional, but instinctive and of very necessity. There is something there which draws men in spite of themselves.

This putting God in a new light is indeed at once the central thing and historically the most certain thing in Jesus, and also the abiding secret of Christianity. I do not mean the teaching alone, but the teaching interpreted as it must be interpreted by the whole personality of the Teacher, His life and character, His death and triumphant personal activity after death. Jesus taught a new conception of God and He lived it. Can there be anything more completely fundamental for mankind? It carries with it the change of heart which makes possible fellowship with God and a right relation to our neighbour. It is not redemption by knowledge in itself, but redemption by a revelation which is a dynamic, because it brings us into touch with God in a new way. And to know God in this sense is life eternal.

We have tried to confine ourselves to our limits. The historian cannot see in Jesus anything less than a mysterious and overwhelming personality; when he considers not this or that feature in isolation, but the impression and effect of the whole, he is even justified in speaking of it as unique, unparalleled. History at least gives us abundant materials on which the theology of faith and religious experience must set to work, and it warns us that no easy or superficial solution will be adequate. I venture to put this before you as the starting-point for our conference. And, though here, perhaps, I may be going beyond my thesis, I would add a further suggestion. The impression made on us by Jesus is not of a limited greatness which was afterwards exaggerated, a nucleus round which accretions gathered with the laudable but mistaken object of presenting Him as more remarkable than He was. It is rather of an unfathomed volcanic personality, which was in reality far greater than any interpretation men could give of Him. The Virgin Birth, miracles, omniscience, the empty tomb, titles such as Messiah, Son of Man, Logos, Son of God—in so far as these conceptions may be open to debate, it is not because they raise Jesus too high, but because they are all partial, one-sided, inadequate to do justice to the central figure of history, to One who, by what He was and by what He taught, revealed to mankind the perfection of God and of Man.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS?

By the Rev. R. H. LIGHTFOOT, M.A., Fellow of New College, Oxford.

IT is often said, and with a certain measure of truth, that the materials for an objective biography of Jesus Christ do not exist. The Synoptic Gospels are not biographies, but presentations to a later generation of the original revelation, written, in the case of St. Matthew and St. Luke at any rate, from a somewhat definite standpoint, and designed to stir the will, and to awaken faith and love; while St. John's Gospel, which stands on the ground that St. Paul conquered, probably consists very largely of things which our Lord 'had to say' to His disciples, but which at the time they could not 'bear'[1] to hear. I think we may rightly claim that in the Fourth Gospel we have an absolutely true interpretation of the permanent meaning and universal significance of the Christian revelation, which only became possible when the first moulds, into which the divine treasure had perforce been poured, had broken up. But it is also probably true that the Synoptists give us a more accurate picture of the outward circumstances of our Lord's ministry, and of the manner and style of His teaching; and it is obvious at once how incomplete they are.

And not only incomplete; they are also far from being clear in their treatment, to take a single instance, of His Messianic claim. It is thought by many that at least three strata of Christological doctrine are discernible in the Synoptic Gospels, lying side by side with, or crossing each other, with a remarkable simplicity. According to one of these views, our Lord kept His Messiahship a strict secret until St. Peter was able to give utterance to it at Caesarea Philippi, on the eve of the final journey southward to Jerusalem. And yet the earlier chapters of these Gospels abound with sayings and actions which are difficult to reconcile with the view that our Lord walked on earth simply as one who is as other men are, or as

[1] St. John xvi, 12.

a merely human teacher of righteousness. He seems to have called Himself constantly the Son of Man, whatever that title may imply; He worked miracles which even at that time were certainly not considered possible to ordinary men; and the Sermon on the Mount, which is placed in the First Gospel at the outset of the ministry, is couched from first to last in the language of superhuman authority. This second stratum of doctrine may be said to predominate in the Synoptic Gospels. According to it, our Lord speaks not only as the last and greatest of the prophets, but as One Who is inspired and infallible, the Saviour of mankind here, and their Judge hereafter. It has been said that in by far the largest portion of the Synoptic Gospels our Lord is very nearly the Christ of traditional belief.

The third stratum is found much less frequently in the Synoptic record, though it is unquestionably embedded there. This is the Johannine doctrine of the Son, which is most precisely stated in the famous passage in St. Matt. xi and its parallel. It should further be noticed that the closing verses of both the First and the Third Gospel contain the Johannine doctrine of the Spirit of Christ immanent in the hearts of believers—that doctrine in which the expected Parousia is spiritualized and transmuted from the future to the present. Indeed, in St. Luke's Gospel, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is largely anti-eschatological, is already prominent; and several sayings in this Gospel suggest that 'the kingdom' has in a sense already come.

The recognition of these differing presentations of the Person of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels no doubt presents a problem to the student; but none the less I believe that Weinel was correct when he said that 'we know Jesus full well,' and I do not think that we need have any doubt at all as to His personality or the general nature of His teaching. I will ask your attention chiefly to certain features in both, which we have perhaps tended to neglect.

In the first place, is it not true that, at any rate until the war, we had certainly inclined to picture our Lord as before all things calm, serene, and gentle?[2] The conventional por-

[2] In this paragraph, and elsewhere in this paper, I desire to express my obligations to the writings of the Dean of St. Paul's.

trait of Him in modern art expressed a benign dignity, and little else. But there are unmistakable traces in the Gospels of a nature which could be deeply stirred. It cannot have been for nothing that it was thought on one occasion[3] that He was beside Himself. It is not compatible with a placid disposition that the Spirit should drive Him forth[4] into the wilderness. The weeping over Jerusalem, the agony in the garden, and other incidents[5] all go to confirm the impression that He could be subject to intense emotion. The calm, the serenity,[6] the dignity, and the sweet reasonableness[7] were all there; but beneath the surface must have glowed volcanic fires, of which we cannot guess the terrible energy. At times He seems to have impressed those who knew Him best with a sense of awful power in restraint.[8] For the most part His disciples were constrained to treat Him with utter reverence.[9] With a single remarkable exception,[10] no one ever dared to pity Him; and on that occasion He would not accept the pity. Only twice do we read of advice being offered to Him: by His mother,[11] and by St. Peter;[12] and on the second at least of these occasions, the dearly-loved counsellor received a withering rebuke. And yet this awful Personality was always full of gentleness and sympathy for the sick, the sorry, and the sinner. He called the little children to Him in the streets and fondled them[13]: He loved to visit humble people in their homes: He rejoiced with the joyous at weddings and at festivals. This marvellous union of strength and tenderness, of heroic earnestness with extreme simplicity, must have given the personality

[3] St. Mark iii, 21: the ἔλεγον is almost certainly one of the many instances of St. Mark's use of the impersonal plural, 'people were saying,' and is not governed by οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ.

[4] St. Mark i, 12.

[5] St. Mark iii, 5; St. John xi, 33, 35.

[6] St. Mark iv, 35-41.

[7] St. John xviii, 23, 23; in this connection note St. Matt. v, 39.

[8] St. Mark x, 32: Professor C. H. Turner suggests ἐθαμβεῖτο here.

[9] St. Mark iv, 41, ix, 32, 34: and the possible exceptions Mark iv, 38, v, 31, viii, 32 only, I think, test the general rule.

[10] St. Luke xxiii, 27.

[11] St. John ii, 3, 4.

[12] St. Mark viii, 32, 33.

[13] Note that the Greek may suggest that they were trying of their own accord to reach Him.

of our Lord a wholly unique power and attractiveness. It is not an accident that the word 'courage' was so often on His lips.

And the source of this temper is very clearly shown in the Gospels. It was the unique intensity with which He realized the presence of God: the absolute spontaneousness of His life in the eternal world, all the time He mixed with men. Obviously His life was throughout a life of prayer, of ceaseless communion, whether on hill-tops[14] or in cities, by day or by night, with His heavenly Father. This spontaneity and intensity of personal religion at once transformed all joy into thanksgiving,[15] all pain into acceptance. And further, He taught His disciples that they too could all have ready access to their Father in heaven, Who cares for all His children; and not only for His children, also for the birds and the flowers and the grass of the field. He taught them that no true harm can happen to those who love and trust God; that we need not be anxious about the necessaries of life—there is happily something more important[16] which should be our first concern—and that man's true happiness depends mainly on three things: absolute sincerity, or single-mindedness; ready sympathy, or warm affections; and a devotion to higher and nobler interests in life which He called the service of God, and pronounced to be incompatible with deliberate, prudent worldliness. This ideal involved what has been called a transvaluation of all values; it cut across all ordinary schemes of pleasure and ambition; and in return for the very real renunciations which it demanded, it promised a deep, spiritual, indestructible happiness, based on the consciousness of obedience to the true law of our being, and filial communion with our Heavenly Father. No immunity from suffering was promised, or held out as possible; rather the reverse; but all earthly troubles are effectually overcome by the spirit and the power in which they are met. For our true life is eternal;

[14] Note St. Matt. iv, 8, v, 1, xxviii, 16; St. Mark iii, 13, ix, 2; St. Luke xxi, 37.

[15] *Cf.* especially St. Luke x, 17-21.

[16] St. Luke xii, 15, 31, 32, 34.

physical death is not a thing to be afraid of,[17] even when accompanied by 'the worst that man can breathe.'[18]

Unlike John the Baptist, our Lord, we know, was no ascetic. And yet underneath all the simplicity and geniality which permitted Him to mix in social life, sharing all that was innocent in the life of His people, there was always a kernel of severity, renunciation, and detachment. He could never forget for a moment the infinite value of the individual self, or soul, and the extreme unimportance of the 'cares of this life' which tend to make us forget its true purpose. Worldly interests He views and judges without harshness, unlike most religious teachers, but with an unmistakable aloofness, often mixed with a gentle pity and expressed with a kind of delicate irony. In *St. Luke* ix, 25, for instance, sadness and humour meet in the thought of the plutocrat, who has finally succeeded in making himself master of *everything*, inspecting all his goods, and finding nothing missing, nothing at all, except, unfortunately, the owner himself. He has lost the only thing that is of absolute value, namely, his own life or soul. And I have asked your attention to this familiar passage, because it seems to me that it gives us the exact reverse of the doctrine of the Cross, *viz.* that when everything is lost, then, and then only, all is found. It suggests strongly, I think, that the Speaker, when He uttered it, was absolutely master of the revelation which He brought, and in which He lived and died, though I do not forget, of course, that we must give full weight also to the reality of the agony in Gethsemane, and of the cry of desolation from the Cross. At any rate our Lord, unlike many of the Old Testament prophets, seems to have been at no pains to vindicate the divine justice to individuals in matters of this world. He almost laughs at a man who brings Him a burning family grievance to be redressed. According to Him, God at one time says, 'I will give unto this last even as unto thee,' and at another, 'To everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.' Both are unfair, perhaps we say; but why worry? Our true wages, fortunately, are not paid in this currency. It is for the same reason that the mammon-

[17] St. Luke xii, 4. [18] St. Luke xxi, 16, 18.

worshipper is condemned, not so much as a robber or oppressor, but as a fool who has missed his way in life.

And yet nothing could be further from the truth than to suggest that the Gospels encourage us, in some words of St. Augustine, to know only God and our own souls. Our Lord's life was not an isolated, introspective life. His detachment from external things was combined with the intensest interest in, and love for, the personalities of men and women. He went about doing good,[19] we read; we may say that He could not go about without doing good. He broke down all artificial barriers by ignoring them; and among those whom He most welcomed, if they showed any desire to come in contact with Him, were the outcasts of society, some of whom He persuaded by personal influence, which was His only weapon, to give up their anti-social activities. His whole life was one of free, unstinted self-giving in the cause of living righteousness. And, what is perhaps most significant of all, He left no code, no book, no system; He only left Himself.

[19] Acts x, 38.

CHRIST AND THE CREEDS[1]

By Professor F. J. Foakes Jackson, D.D., Union Theological Seminary, New York.

I AM going to ask the indulgence of the Conference by requesting them to listen not to a speech, but to another paper. I do so because I feel that I am in part, at least, the cause of the choice of this most interesting of subjects, 'Christ and the Creeds.'

It is one which I verily believe that only a body like ours would venture to bring forward in these days. No one can fail to notice how carefully last year the official leaders of the Church abstained from raising the question of the fundamentals of our religion. The Lambeth Conference did, it is true, invite all Christians to unite with them on the basis of the Nicene Creed, but that was all. The bishops did not so much as hint on the method of its reception, or the difficulty of

[1] This paper was not part of the official programme of the Girton Conference, but since Professor Lake's and Dr. Foakes Jackson's position had been criticized, it was felt that opportunity of defence ought to be given. —[Ed. *M.C.*]

reconciling the formulas of the fourth century with modern views as to the sense in which the Scripture should be interpreted, or with the philosophy of the present day. Of the difficulties which perplex most of us their lordships offered us no solution.

Here it is otherwise. We have deliberately chosen to discuss the very fundamentals of the Christian faith and to face and not to shirk that most pointed of all questions: 'What think ye of Christ?'

The reason for this choice of the most important of subjects is, I have the vanity to suppose, the publication of the first volume of the *Beginnings of Christianity*[2], which Prof. Lake and I have edited. We have there placed before the English-speaking world an exposition of our theory of the character of primitive Christianity and of the part the Founder took in bringing into being the Church with its dogmas and theory of life. Dr. Lake has given his opinions in a more popular form in his *Landmarks of Christianity*.

Dr. Lake and I were determined that we would place in the hands of the public a statement of the actual facts as they appeared to us. We both realized the importance of this. Hitherto English commentators have displayed a tendency to work either for the edification of the readers or the advancement of their particular Church; and they have looked to the dogmatic inferences which might be drawn from their statements. We, on the contrary, have followed the continental method in endeavouring to produce, as far as lay in our power, a simple statement of the condition of primitive Christianity, and to invite our critics to correct us if we were in error. In so doing we were fully aware that we laid ourselves open to reprobation.

The hostile criticism to which the concluding chapters of *Beginnings* have been subjected has been mainly from Anglican reviewers. On the Continent our work has been well received

[2] The part of the book under discussion is Part III, Primitive Christianity, by the editors. This deals with such questions as 'the Meaning of the Kingdom of God,' 'the Use of Gentile Christianity,' and 'the Development of thought on the Spirit, the Church, and Baptism.' But most important is the last treating on the sense originally given to such expressions as 'Christ, Son of Man, &c.,' when first applied to the Founder of our religion.

and appreciatively discussed, as it has been also in Scotland and in the Nonconformist and Non-sectarian newspapers. We have been most severely rebuked by the Liberals of our own Church, who have my sincere sympathy. They are fighting a hard fight. On the one hand, they see that they are losing the support of the public because there is little demand for a reasonable presentation of Christianity. People are not saying as they did formerly, 'Give up your impossible dogmas and the evident myths on which they are based, and let us have a plain statement of the essentials of Christianity.' The day for such lectures as Harnack's *What is Christianity?* is over. There is a growing conviction, not the less dangerous because it now rarely finds a voice, that Christianity can be ignored. Men no longer care about the sort of sermon they once listened to with attention, and are less and less troubled by religious doubts: not because they have ceased to doubt, but because they are hardly interested at all in the religious problem. What, therefore, is needed is something which will arouse and stimulate men to shake off this lethargy and cause people to realize that religion is one of the most important things in the world.

This is being done, but more successfully outside than within the Anglican communion. I know no better exponent than my colleague, Prof. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in America. The question, however, is whether this type of Liberal Christianity is likely to endure: and I venture to express my doubts on this point.

Its weakness appears to me to be that it is unhistorical. It does not take account of the fact that the Christian religion is a living organism which has been subject to the law of growth and development, and that every step in its progress is the logical consequence of what is gone before; and that this is true not only of the great historic Churches, but of every Christian society. For, example, till recently all Christians believed that the end of their faith was salvation in the world to come; that their future depended on their faith and conduct in this present life; that Jesus Christ, Who was before all creation, came down from heaven to save mankind; that salvation was through Him alone. It mattered very little whether they knew this from the Bible only, as the Protestants

taught, or from the Bible interpreted by the Church according to the Catholic view. All were agreed that Christianity was a divine revelation contained in an inspired and infallible book. Now practically to ignore this, or at least to explain it in a sense in which nobody has understood it for eighteen centuries, is to break completely the chain which links the Church of the past with that of to-day. However eloquent these teachers may be, however elevated their morality, they are preaching something entirely alien from what was once meant by Christianity, They have lost the historical Christ, and have not regained Him by converting Him into a social reformer, a moral legislator, a revealer of a new conception of God. They are really preaching an entirely new religion, and concealing the fact even from themselves by disguising it in the phraseology of the old, which as employed by them is sometimes without meaning.

These are the people who look for help from us, who are labouring in the obscure field of primitive Christianity. They ask us to give them Christ as they want Him to be, and when we lay the facts before them, they declare them to be stones presented to hungry folk who are clamouring for bread.

At Oxford the other day I had a most interesting talk with two friends, a report of which we made and cast into the form of a dialogue. It is sufficient here to say that it turned on the question as to whether justice had been done to the historic Jesus in *Beginnings*. Our friends did not ask Lake and me to retract anything, but to place before the public a fuller statement of our view of the work of Jesus. They complained that 'the total impression conveyed by your chapter is that Jesus was really a commonplace figure, of whom very little is known, and that little not much to His credit.'

The chief criticism, however, is that the treatment of Jesus in *Beginnings* is bad history, because Christianity could have only been due to what is described as

> 'The *élan spirituel* produced by the impact of a colossal religious genius having that mesmeric power of stirring men up from the depths and initiating a movement which has belonged to all great religious leaders.'

Now, nobody would deny that the Founder of Christianity was all this : and if anyone were disposed to hesitate on account

of the scarcity of authentic information concerning Him, he might reassure himself by the reflection that the creation of the Jesus of the Synoptists was too original a feat for any writer or group of writers to have accomplished, especially if it be remembered that the interest of the first believers was centred in Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of the Church. This is generally admitted: and I can endorse what is said by a friend:

> 'The Synoptic portrait of Jesus is not a product of the Church theology, but something that has survived *in spite of it.*'

This I think is emphasized by the fact that in the Third Gospel we have a most attractive portrait of the Jesus of the Galilean ministry, with His parables and homely sayings; and in *Acts* the preaching of Jesus as the Christ without an allusion to anything He said except the *logion* not recorded elsewhere in the New Testament, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Of course it would have been easy to have satisfied the demand made by Liberal piety by elaborating this, and it would have disarmed much criticism. But our purpose was neither to disarm criticism nor supply material for sermons. We had set ourselves to work to present our view of the earliest development of the Christian faith in days when the Church was little more than one of the many synagogues in Jerusalem. We did not set forth what they might have preached, but the sort of presentation of Jesus which they actually gave to the world. It was not, therefore, germane to our purpose to enter into a description of a side of the work and character of Christ which is not touched upon, or very slightly, in the earlier Christian documents outside the Synoptists. It would have been even misleading to do so, when one of our chief objects was to make students of the subject realize the difficulties which present themselves to the modern man. We have been so accustomed to ignore our difficulties in England, or to state them disguised in pious phraseology, that they are almost unrecognizable, and when they are stated in plain language, they repel the reader. But unless they are understood, they cannot be properly met.

So much may be said to those Liberals who charge us with coldness and detachment in our dealings with the Synoptic

problem. They are truly anxious for a Christ based on the first three Gospels; but He eludes their grasp, because this is not what the Church at the first accepted. What appears to have been preached was not a character of singular charm and beauty during His life on earth, but a Risen Saviour who was expected to come speedily to judge the quick and the dead. How far the words and character of Jesus in the Synoptists influenced those who received Him as Saviour is a question into which we cannot enter at present.

There remains another type of mind influential in modern Christianity. This regards the essence of Christianity as sacramental; with the historical Jesus it has little connection: it is concerned with the Lord mediated to man by the Church through the sacraments. This school is derived from the Christianity at the close of the second century, which is the legitimate offspring of that at the end of the first. The theology is that of the epistles of St. Paul, matured in the Fourth Gospel. Sacramental Christianity at least has a long record and an historical basis; and here I may quote part of Prof. Lake's proposed answer to Dr. Headlam's criticism in the *Church Quarterly*, which he has sent me:

> 'There is no doubt as to the nature of Christianity at the end of the second century. Some of the details are still obscure, and the extent of local variation is in need of further discussion, but in the main the Church of Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria is the Catholic Church. It is an institution claiming divine authority, given to it by Jesus Christ, offering supernatural salvation through its sacraments and ministry to those who fulfil its requirements of holding the true faith, and leading a pure life. It did not say that those who lead a pure life, or hold the right opinions will be saved; but that it would give the benefit of its saving sacraments only to those who fulfilled these requirements. Salvation was through the sacraments, not through faith or morality, but faith and morality were required from those to whom the sacraments were offered. Not only was that the Christianity of Irenaeus and his contemporaries; it has remained the Christianity of the Catholic Church to this day. Protestants may ignore or regret the fact, but historians cannot deny it.
>
> 'The tradition of the Church is that this Christianity was founded by Jesus Himself, not necessarily in every detail, but so that those points which cannot be traced back to Him follow by natural development and are not due to accretion from other sources, whether Jewish or heathen.

'The whole problem of Christian origins is whether this tradition is true.[3] It is in principle identical with the problem faced by the Old Testament critics of the last century; the difference is merely that the tradition of Israel covers several centuries, and the tradition of the Church only a few years. The solution propounded by the critics of the New Testament is also similar. They maintain that an analytic study of the historical documents shows that there is a real difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics, which cannot be explained as due to supplementary information, but must represent a quite different view as to the nature, work, preaching, and ministry of Jesus. They think that in general the Fourth Gospel represents the Catholic position; it portrays the Incarnate Logos, and it offers supernatural salvation through a sacramental system. It is the true foundation-document of Catholic Christianity. On the other hand the Synoptic Gospels, with the exception of a few passages which can safely be ascribed to the last redactor, say nothing of the Incarnate Logos, nothing of the Church, nothing of the sacrament of Christian baptism. They show us the picture of Jesus preaching not Himself but the Kingdom, not supernatural salvation but repentance, not sacramental regeneration but a changed attitude to life and a reformation of conduct, not the Church with its divine authority but the imminent and inevitable catastrophe of the great day of the Lord when the quick and the dead shall stand for judgment before the Son of Man.

'The difference is too great to be explained as a natural development. There must have been accretion from external sources, and the most important features of the Johannine and Catholic position are part of this accretion.

'Once more the situation is the same as that found in the study of the Old Testament. The Fourth Gospel is in many ways the analogue to the Pentateuch, in so far as it is the basic document of the Church. The Synoptic Gospels are the analogues partly to JE, partly to the historical books. The result is exactly the same: what tradition regards as the basis is shown by criticism to be the result.

'But if the beginnings of Christianity are not what tradition—which means the Johannine Gospel—represents, what was their real nature? What was the process of change, development and accretion which led from Jesus to the Church?'

This defines the problem we are trying to solve, namely, the relationship between four types of Christianity: that of the Synoptic Jesus Who preached God and the Kingdom, and, as we believe, not Himself; that of *Acts*, especially the earlier chapters, declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jews, and the pourer out of the Spirit; that of Paul; and finally the Johannine doctrine of the incarnate pre-existent

[3] It must not be confused with another question, of even greater importance,—whether the claim of the Church to be the supernatural agent of salvation holds good. On this latter point there are, besides the traditional view, two possibilities: (1) that the claim of the Church is true, but the tradition of its origin fallacious, (2) that its tradition is true, though its claim is mistaken.

Word of God. From this the road to what we call Catholic Christianity is plain.

But the path which leads from the historic Jesus to the Johannine presentation of His work and office is indeed obscure and hard to trace; and especially difficult is it to discover how it was that the first preaching of the kingdom developed into a sacramental religion. Here we are compelled to wound the susceptibilities of some by maintaining that in this obscure period there was developed a sacramental—or, to use the Greek equivalent—a 'mystery' cult in the Christian community. We have adopted the view that Judaism, even where its rites were symbolical, was never a sacramental religion—that is no act or ceremony *per se* imparted grace, or changed the nature of the recipient. The tendency which led to sacramentalism was Gentile, and of this there is abundant confirmation in those religions of the time which were personal and private rather than official. We are, however, charged with having used the testimony of the second century to prove our proposition in regard to the first. To this I believe we have a fairly complete answer. I quote Dr. Lake's words:

> 'The thesis maintained in this book is that Christianity became sacramental—or a Mystery religion—on passing from Jewish to Greco-Oriental surroundings. Why it did so we do not know. There were other religions which were sacramental, but there is no reason to suppose that there was direct borrowing from individual religions, and I never said that there was. Rather, all these sacramental religions made use of common ideas and common phraseology. Dr. Headlam has himself summarised—with admirable brevity in his edition of the Epistle to the Romans—the evidence for mystery religions in Rome in the first century. "And foreign superstition," he says, "was beginning to spread. The earliest monuments of the worship of Mithras date from the time of Tiberius. Lucan in his *Pharsalia* celebrates the worship of Isis in Rome; Nero himself reverenced the Syrian Goddess, who was called by many names but is known to us best as Astarte." Moreover, that the question presents many problems, and cannot be easily dismissed is stated by me on page 4 of *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*. "Much is obscure in their history, even though hypothesis be given the widest range and a friendly hearing. The central problem, which still requires much further attention than it has as yet received, is how and when these religions became mystery cults. As we know them in the Roman Empire all have the same central feature of offering personal salvation to their adherents through the sacraments. But did they have this characteristic in their original homes, where they were national religions? The evidence that they did so is not convincing, and perhaps cannot be, because of the absence of literary sources. For

instance, one of the best known of these religions is the cult of Isis, for the nature of which in the second and third centuries there is admirable evidence in the writings of Plutarch and Apuleius.[4] It was then clearly a sacramental religion offering private salvation. It was also connected with a myth which was obviously a hindrance rather than a help to these educated Romans, and this myth can be traced back to the monuments of ancient Egypt. Are we justified in concluding that the interpretation in ancient Egypt was the same as in imperial Rome? It may be so; but it is possible that the sacramental nature, though not the element of private salvation came in, in Hellenistic or in Imperial times, to meet the necessity of Egyptians who had lost all sense of belonging to a living nation or having a national religion, and of Greeks who with decadent enthusiasm desired imported rites.'' '

It would have been perfectly easy for Dr. Lake and me to have satisfied the sacramentalists, or, at any rate, a portion of them, by a paragraph saying that, if the Christian mysteries were Greek rather than Jewish, it was because the pagan world was realizing the need of communion with God by some visible means, and that in itself this is an argument for the unerring wisdom of the Church, which actually satisfied a deep craving of the human heart by providing that which paganism in its mysteries had in vain tried to give. We could have dwelt on the fact that, whilst all other 'mysteries' had vanished, the Christian Eucharist still supplies the Catholics with a real communion with God. This and much more we might have said, and received our meed of applause. Not only this, but we should have created a feeling that, though our theories were revolutionary, in our hearts we were sound.

But we did not do this, because we were convinced that the present time is one in which the Church needs a plain statement of the difficulties of modern Christianity that it may realize where it stands. It seemed to us to be rather necessary to present the plain facts with little or no comments, in order that our readers might judge of them and come to their own conclusions. We were aware when we wrote that we should be charged with coldness, with lack of appreciation of the causes of the triumph of the Faith, and even with infidelity. Yet, notwithstanding, we have written as we have done in *Beginnings*.

[4] I might have added that there is abundant evidence for its existence in Rome and elsewhere long before Christianity. The only possible doubt is its nature at that date.

JESUS AS THE REVEALER OF GOD

By Canon R. B. Tollinton, D.D., author of *Clement of Alexandria.*

THERE is a well-known passage in Plutarch, in which he records the inscription on a statue of Isis in the Egyptian city of Sais: 'I am all,' it runs, 'that has been, and that is, and that shall be, and no mortal hath ever raised my veil.' This is an extreme expression of the inability of the human mind to apprehend ultimate reality, which from the religious standpoint is another name for God. We find a complete contrast to it in one of the signs recorded by the Synoptic Gospels as having accompanied the Crucifixion: 'The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.' The secret then was made known; the mystery revealed. Through Jesus the way was made open to God, who is the source of all that has been, is and shall be.

This contrast between the inscription recorded in Plutarch and the sign spoken of by the Synoptists represents, no doubt in an extreme form, the distinction which has been drawn by long tradition between what comes through revelation and the little which, apart from revelation, man can know about God. Even with Bishop Butler, for whom Revealed Religion was a republication of Natural Religion, the contrast still is marked and dominant. How far does it hold for us? How far do we regard the revelation of God in and through the life and teaching of Jesus as diverse from such other self-manifestations of God as we discern, or believe we discern in, let us say, nature, in history and in the beauty of the world?

I suggest that, while each mode of revelation must naturally have its own characteristics, and while in content one will be fuller and more intimate than another, still, the revelation of God in Jesus is fundamentally akin to, and in the same series with, the other phases of the self-expression of the divine. God who spoke by divers portions and in divers manners hath spoken also in a Son. The true light came into the world, but it was none other than the light that lighteth every man. The distinction drawn sometimes with so much emphasis

between revelation and reason, or between revelation and discovery is, I believe, fundamentally unsound; the process is one and the same, though you may regard it from different points of view. When a truth, we say, comes home to the mind, there is always a revelation; equally so with Newton's apple and Simon Peter's confession of the Christ. When the mind lays hold of any fragment of reality, you may call it discovery or reason, but the same thing occurs, though it is viewed from the other standpoint. All revelation must be to a mind that is capable of receiving it, and all discovery implies that truth reveals a manifesto itself to a discoverer.

Therefore we turn to Nature and find evidence of order, system, rationality, and attribute those qualities to God. We find more: we find aim and purpose, for both scientists and philosophers seem to have given back to us the teleology which some feared had been lost with the coming of evolution.

We turn to history, and though we have been warned of late that human progress is by no means an automatic certainty, still, it moves; moral principles can be discerned. Even in the great war a righteous cause counted for something. The action of God in history seems probably a good deal less marked to us than it did to the writers of the Books of Kings or to Thomas Carlyle; still, it is there, and in the course and process of the affairs of men we can read, when we take the wide view, the tendency that makes for righteousness.

So with the fact of the beauty of the world. I often wonder that more use is not made of the asthetic argument in apologetici. Though in our scale of values, being English and not Greek, we probably place the beautiful below the good and the true, still, as an expression of, and key to, reality, the beauty of the world has at least this advantage, that it is so unquestionable; it has so slight an adverse account to overcome. Moral ugliness is common enough; ugliness in Nature—is there such a thing? If the world were as good as it is beautiful, how many of faith's difficulties would be removed. Sunsets teach some of us more than sermons. 'Out of Sion hath God appeared in perfect beauty.'

For religion, there are three modes of the self-revelation—self-manifestation is a better word—of God. They are par-

tial; they are limited by their media; they need interpretation; they raise problems and difficulties for those who accept them, but in each case we believe that we have God, ultimate reality, manifested under limitations. I can believe as much about Jesus. I don't think I wish to believe more. I see no gain in contending that in Jesus God came Himself into our world, with the implication that it is not as 'Himself,' but in some other manner that He comes, when

> 'On the glimmering limit far withdrawn,
> God makes himself an awful rose of dawn,'

or when He reveals Himself to us as the 'Divinity which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.' I would keep the dictrine of the Incarnation in the closest relation with the doctrine of divine immanence, admitting wide differences of degree and mode, and keeping definitely clear of Pantheism, yet believing that we give to the revelation of God in Jesus not a lower, but a heightened honour when we relate it rather than isolate it, when we regard it as a part of the world's spiritual order rather than as an exceptional incursion, when its affinity with what else we value most in life, rather than its particularity, is regarded as constituting its truest title to our welcome.

Passing from these general aspects of the self-revelation of God in Jesus, we may come closely in contact with our subject if we contrast this revelation with the conception of God we find in the Old Testament, and with some of the interpretations of the divine nature which meet us in philosophy.

The statement is made in a recent work of recognized importance, not altogether ignored in our discussion yesterday morning, that 'the God of Jesus is the God of the Jews, about whom he says nothing that cannot be paralleled in Jewish literature.' I have no desire to say that this statement is not true, but I do question whether it is the whole truth. Jesus was a Jew, His God is the God of Abraham. His thoughts of God are plainly influenced by the Old Testament. Earlier parallels may be found to many sayings in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet it would hardly be contended that the teaching of Jesus left things exactly as they were. In two respects, it appears to me, truer ideas of God—I do not say came with Jesus—but received fuller currency and recognition through Him. God,

as Jesus thought of Him, was more universal, and God was less remote.

The Jahweh of the Old Testament is a national deity. Elements of this particularism may remain—do remain—even in the teaching of Jesus, but He goes far beyond them. The parable of the Prodigal Son has its universal aspects. Some of the Beatitudes hold for all the children of men. When Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within you, or even if the true rendering be, 'in the midst of you,' it seems that Jesus is definitely taking a conception of the kingdom that was in the minds of His questioners, and giving it a wide and more universalistic interpretation. This strain of teaching is so marked that I do not think the eschatologists will rob us of it, in spite of the very able and interesting paper which we all read in the *Modern Churchman* for March. When those who came after Him spoke of there being neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ Jesus, and the worship God approves as being neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, but wherever and by whomsoever it is rendered in spirit and in truth, they reflect or appropriate the mind of Jesus. Though He starts with the God of Abraham and makes the synagogue and the temple, as well as the mountain-top, his place of prayer, though His own special mission is to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, still, the revelation broadens out and sheds its ethnic particularity and becomes so capable of reception by man as man down all the changes of the centuries and in places far remote, and of widely diverse outlook, from Galilee and Judæa.

Also the God of Jesus is less remote. The Most High, the Sovereign, the eastern Potentate, the Law-Giver, the Lord of Hosts, becomes our Father which is in heaven. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but even with the Psalmist what began as fear could rise to the level of love. 'No wise man,' says Seneca, 'fears the gods,' and for the children of the kingdom, even if they be not wise in the wisdom of the world, fear is lost in confidence. God humbles our brain, and knows our needs, and welcomes us when we return after going astray, and can forgive, in spite of the fact that an accurate record is kept of our every idle word. There is a wonderful serenity about this Galilean teaching. Far more

there in Galilee, than under the strain and tension of the last period in Judæa and Jerusalem, do we see the real thought of Jesus about the Father. Marcion drove his contrast between the Old Testament and the New too far, but he had good reason for making it.

The good God whom Jesus revealed has other characteristics, or at least has them more centrally and more evidently than the Creator God and the Law-Giver of the older Scriptures. The Church had to combat Marcion, because she could not let the Old Testament go, and was quite right in her reply that justice and righteousness are elements in love. But there was a difference. The mind of the Law-Giver was more adequately interpreted. Rules are less, principles are more. The distribution of the emphasis is altered. The cringing of the slave is gone. 'Spare me, good Lord'—what a conception of the divine nature does this imply!—is not the prayer of Jesus. The punctual payment, the ceremonial obeisance of the subject to his King, are less in evidence. Rather the child is happy and confident in the order of the Father's house, and this spirit need not be lost, even when we render unto God the things that are God's. The spiritual attitude Jesus desired to see in men has its abundant implication as to the corresponding features in the divine nature. Jesus has added something even to Deuteronomy, Isaiah and the Psalms—the books He Himself loved best in all the ancient library.

As to philosophy, I should be sorry to say that the God of Jesus was not the God of the philosophers. Rather He is the same God, but seen from a different point of view. For the appeal of philosophy is to the intellect. Even those who in recent days have sought to discredit the intellect, can only do so by inviting the intellect to sit in judgment on itself, and to pass a relatively adverse verdict upon its own performances. In regard to religion, philosophy seeks to offer a reasoned presentation of the nature of God and of His relation to the world. Now, in the main Jesus appealed to the heart and to the will rather than to the head. No doubt in the Fourth Gospel there is much that does approximate to the philosophic standpoint, and I notice that Canon Wilson, in a recent book, *Christ's Thought of God*, which I have not yet seen, makes considerable

use of this authority. He has far more right to judge than I. Let me venture, however, to suggest that even in such wonderful words as the saying: 'This is life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ,' my own feeling is that we have a quite valid piece of interpretation and insight, rather than a record of words likely to have been used by Jesus Himself. Renan's alternative: either He spoke as the Synoptists say, or He spoke as John says—one, not both, has not altogether lost its force. I should therefore regard the conversation with Nicodemus, and the discussions with the Jews, as interpretation rather than as record, though indeed it might be urged that every record is really an interpretation. For our present purpose, let it be simply said that the revelation of God in Jesus is not in the main upon the plane of the intellect. That field was left quite open for the Alexandrines and the Gifford lecturers. The will of God and the love of God are with Jesus the ever-present realities. The philosophers' problems: How to find room in one universe for God and man; How to conceive the absolute as related; How to fit human freedom into a cosmos of cause and effect, do not concern, still less trouble Him, partly because, in spite of the Wisdom Literature of Spinoza, the Jew at heart is not a philosopher. Only as they result in wrong conduct does Jesus criticize the erroneous conceptions of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Young Ruler must will the great surrender. There is more of the will than of the mind in the faith Jesus demanded, and in the supreme crises of His own personal life, at the Temptation, in deciding to go up to Jerusalem, in Gethsemane, the issue is with the will; can He will for Himself what the Father has willed for Him? and there lie His tremendous spiritual victories. 'In His will is our peace'—Dante's well-known line holds the secret of the revelation. The God of Jesus is no remote, abstract, unqualified divinity, but a Being with marked moral preferences. It is an anthropomorphic conception? Yes, but can we interpret God better than by the light of what we recognize as highest in man? and can any manifestation of the Ultimate be made to man except in the terms of his own experience?

So with the heart, the emotions, feeling. 'Life,' said Horace Walpole, 'is a comedy to those who think, and largely

to those who feel.' But there is nothing bitter or cynical in Jesus, and His sarcastic words were few. God is revealed in Him and through Him in the glad and joyous consciousness of an immediate relationship. His 'Fear not, little flock,' has its echo in Paul's 'Rejoice in the Lord,' and the χάρις—gladness as well as grace, of Christian salutation was wholly appropriate for His followers. We are to love God rather than to understand Him. If God, as Jesus thought of Him, appeals sometimes to the will and involves man in the hard struggle between the spirit and the flesh, it is equally true that God is to be recognized in the normal, untroubled development of the soul, which may be just as natural and just as full of unconscious charm as the life of the birds and the growth of the lilies of the field. We have all read books, some of them excellent, on the Sermon on the Mount. I never read one in which something was not lost. The teaching may be admirably expounded and the illustrations chosen with indisputable point, but the tone is gone, the colour is changed, the indefinable spiritual quality has evaporated. 'Never man spake as this Man.' It is the way He says things, which very likely, as the critics tell us, had been said before; it is the feeling that is behind the words; the grace that cannot have been an invention of other men; the whole religious outlook of His teaching, which go far to give it character as a revelation. In will, then, and in feeling, not in mind, God's self-manifestation comes through Jesus. I have read recently, as a sort of preparation for this conference, two philosophic books: Prof. Sorley's *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, and Prof. Pringle Pattison's *Idea of God in Recent Philosophy*. I would wish to acknowledge my great indebtedness to both those writers. Even so St. Ambrose was possibly right from the Christian standpoint when he said: '*Non in dialectica placuit Deo salvum facere populum suum.*

The revelation of God which we owe to Jesus was of permanent value, but it was not absolute or final. Much He taught, much He made manifest by His own life and personality; but much also remained to be taught and learned in after days. This is clearly implied when it is said of Him that He spake the word as men were able to hear it, that He had many things to say which they could not bear as yet, that the

Spirit should guide us into all the truth. It was and is a conditional revelation, growing wider and truer as the conditions admit, shedding some of its older forms, assimilating new constituents. Let us note, in conclusion, some things that have changed for us, some things that remain.

How does the Kingdom of God come? and with this question we raise at once the whole issue of eschatology, apocalyptic, the Parousia, the return of the Son of Man before His messengers have had time to go through the cities of Israel. How far Schweitzer is right in saying that 'the whole history of Christianity down to the present day is based on the non-occurrence of the Parousia,' what proportion of the records we are compelled by criticism to interpret from the eschatological point of view, how and whether we can reconcile the different strains of teaching about the kingdom attributed to Jesus, are serious problems on which much has been said. My present point is only this: that I think we must admit that Jesus expected the divine intervention in a more immediate, catastrophic, abnormal fashion than either events have accredited, or than we can reconcile with what we otherwise know of the ways of God. Something, then, quite frankly we have abandoned. But it is form, not content. The Kingdom of God in its spiritual characteristics is for us what it was for Jesus. There is truth in Tyrrell's claim that 'the religious idea of Jesus embodied in apocalyptic imagery, possesses an abiding value in no way dependent upon the literal worth of that imagery.' The thing that counts has really not been lost.

Again, for one or two slighter instances of ways in which our thoughts of God have changed, we may turn to the parables. When the householder who owns a vineyard pays his labourers the same wage for different periods of service, our economic sense at once suggests that there was bound to be trouble with labour, and that 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' is a justification that will not in these days carry you very far. When the king comes into the banquet hall and orders the man without the wedding garment to be bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness, we feel that the story in our own day would have made the unhappy man slink out into the darkness, uncomfortable and unobserved, of his own free choice, for nothing could be so tedious as heaven to

the unheavenly soul. Again, the unfortunate widow, and the friend who comes for three loaves at midnight, might be taken to imply that by prayer we can persuade God. Jesus here gives us Himself the higher truth; your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Prof. Gwatkin once said that there was a 'battery' theory of prayer. We are learning to abandon it. Dependence, communion, the striving after harmony with the divine will—these are better than petition and are the elements of real value in our prayers. In such slighter ways times and thoughts have changed and the Spirit of Jesus Himself has modified the details, form and setting of His revelation.

What remains? What message still comes to us across the ages from the hill-side in Galilee? This, I think, principally —His God is our God. The characteristics which for Him were fundamental in the divine nature are so still for us. What the God of Jesus desired most in the soul of men are the very qualities of which our modern civilization stands to-day so disastrously and so evidently in need. The standard of values is in essentials unchanged, nor is there any risk of the Lord's Prayer becoming obsolete.

Given this, believing that in the character and teaching of Jesus we do come into contact with ultimate reality, then we need not hestitate to speak of God as revealed in Jesus. We do not isolate this revelation; it is one phase of the divine self-expression, and gains added assurance and increased value from the fact that we learn also of God in other ways. So by faith, for the issue lies beyond the realm of proof, do we cleave to our spiritual interpretation of the life of man upon this planet and of the cosmic order as a whole. There we find our stronghold and assurance, in spite of the very doubtful preponderance of good over evil in the world as we know it now, and in spite of the innumerable minor annoyances of life which, in this 'vale of soul-making,' come about us like the Psalmists' bees. 'I believe in God'; the first four words of the Creed are what really matter. Relatively, it is a point of secondary importance to define in any given revelation the exact extent to which it is limited and conditioned. It is enough that the Life was manifested, and the Lord made flesh, and that in seeing Jesus men beheld the Father.

JESUS AS THE REVEALER OF GOD

By the Rev. J. W. Hunkin, M.A., Dean of Caius College, Cambridge.

WHEN we study the world under the guidance of our modern education, what we are likely to see first of all is the mechanism of it: the way in which it is built up on chemical and physical laws. We get a glimpse of reality as an ordered mechanical system. It looks immense, enormously impressive, but relatively simple. The simplicity, however, is soon shattered when we come to biology. We see that the mechanical view of the world is an abstraction: it leaves out life. Life is a new conception, by grasping which we get nearer to reality. We have still not taken into account what we call personality. Our experience of personality gives us a far deeper insight into reality than we can attain from the natural sciences.[1] Fidelity, courage, love—words like these remind us of fundamental elements in reality upon which a study of chemistry and physics throws no light at all. These things exist. They exist, at any rate, in man. 'An honest man's the noblest work of God'—and therefore an endeavour to realize the meaning of personality in human beings is a way of approach to the knowledge of God. We shall learn more about Him this way than from a study of wave-motion and electric currents. It must be truer to say that God is Love than that He is Force.

What, then, do we learn from our Lord with regard to human personality? We must look at His presentation of the moral ideal, for it is here that we shall discover what He conceived to be the behaviour of persons when they are fulfilling the purpose of their being. Now, when we search the Gospels with a view to grasping our Lord's conception of the moral ideal, we become more and more impressed with the fact that we cannot do justice to it merely by tabulating His ethical maxims. His moral ideal is an integral part of a larger conception, and cannot be detached from the life in which it is embedded.

[1] For a fuller expression of the foregoing argument see J. S. Haldane, *Mechanism, Life and Personality.*

A good deal of labour has been expended upon collecting from other sources parallels to the various moral sentences in the Gospels. And there has been a tendency, and especially in recent years, to do less than justice to the originality of the teaching of our Lord. It is pointed out, for instance, that our Lord's summary of the whole duty of man is taken from the law: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God' (Dt. vi, 4), and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Lev. xix, 18). And writers like M. Loisy suggest that it was not beyond the power of a Jewish rabbi to combine these two sentences from the law. But whatever may have been the exact Jewish interpretation of the first of these sayings, the second, as we may gather both from its context[2] and from Jewish comments upon it, was actually little more than a patriotic maxim. Jew must stand by Jew—a regulation the Jews have, it must be admitted, observed with some success. It was our Lord who gave the saying its modern interpretation, as set forth, for instance, in His parable of the Good Samaritan, a story which the Jews do not altogether appreciate (if we may judge from Mr. Montefiore's commentary) even to this day.

Again, it was recognized long ago, for instance, by the Deists, that the teaching of the Stoics, and particularly the teaching of Epictetus, contains some remarkable parallels to that of our Lord. That of course is true: but the teaching of Epictetus also contains other very different things. Let me quote a passage from the *Encheiridion* (xxxiii):

> 'As to pleasure with women, abstain as far as you can before marriage, but if you do indulge in it, do it in the way which is conformable to custom. Do not however be disagreeable to those who indulge in these pleasures, or reprove them; and do not often boast that you do not indulge in them yourself.'

This is but an illustration of the low view Epictetus takes of the relation between the sexes. Women he generally seems to class with things like soup and dainty cakes.[3]

Or again, attention has recently been drawn to the lofty moral precepts to be found in some of the later Jewish writings. One of the best examples is to be found in *The Testa-*

[2] *Lev.* xix, 18: 'Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

[3] *Discourses,* Book III, xii, xxiv. See also *Encheiridion* xl.

ments of the Twelve Patriarchs, where the ethical teaching is of a high order and reaches one of its highest points in the following passage (*Testament of Gad*, vi)[4]:

> 'Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he repent and confess, forgive him. But if he deny it, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee he take to swearing and so thou sin doubly. And though he deny it and yet have a sense of shame when reproved, give over reproving him. For he who denieth may repent so as not to wrong thee again; yea, he may also honour thee, and be at peace with thee.
>
> 'But if he be shameless and persisteth in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging.'

But it must be remembered that in their present form the Testaments have been at least re-edited by Christian hands, and we have no security that a passage like the one quoted has not been re-written in a Christian sense. In the purely Jewish book dating probably from the same period, the *Book of Jubilees*, there are no such passages.

And even supposing the passage is Jewish, it must be observed that the ideal does not rise to quite the same height as our Lord's. 'Forgive him from the heart and leave to God the avenging' does not aim as high as 'Turn to him the other also.'[5] In the one case you leave your enemy hoping that he may be punished (as, indeed, he deserves to be): in the other you are prepared to go all lengths to undermine his hostility and to turn him into a friend.

But it is not the fact—for fact I still believe it to be—that our Lord's teaching rises above all its parallels that is the most important thing. Far more important is the connection between His teaching and the rest of His life. His moral teaching is embodied in His life. His ethics are presented to us not in the dissecting room, but alive.

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.[6]

We see our Lord Himself living a life of love, love working itself out in all sorts of practical ways—in healing, in kindness,

[4] The translation is by Dr. Charles.
[5] *St. Matt.* v. 39.
[6] *In Memoriam*, xxxvi.

in steadfastness unto death, as well as in moral and spiritual enlightenment. And as we watch it all happening, as it were under our very eyes, we see and know for ourselves that there is nothing better for a man than to occupy himself in this practical love of his fellows. Our Lord does not isolate ethics and put them on an unreal pedestal, as many even of our best ethical teachers tend to do, with the result that a most portentous solemnity is given to life. Flowers and children and sparrows all find their natural place in the Gospels. They are not introduced, as in many ethical treatises, plainly made of lead.

Nor does our Lord take the heart out of the subject by over-systematizing it. Our Lord gives us principles and gives them to us alive, and leaves us to work them out. 'Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?' He once said to a man who wanted Him to enter into the rights and wrongs of a dispute.[7] Every man must be his own casuist.

But further, in our Lord's presentation of human personality as from its fundamental constitution it was meant to be, God unmistakably appears. God is pre-supposed in every syllable of our Lord's teaching. And the God who so appears bears only the remotest resemblance to the Absolute Divinity of the philosopher. Our Lord shows no interest in philosophical speculation as to the metaphysics of the Deity. It is not God-in-Himself but God-in-His-relation-to-us who is ever in our Lord's mind. It is the fact that God is our common Father and all men are His children that makes it possible for us to love them. And in trying to put that love into practice we are not to depend on the superficial elements in their condition, but on the fundamental reality of it. We are to depend on God and not on them. And however unprepossessing they may appear to be, we have to remember that really they are God's and we are His, and we and they were designed for love. It is not God, the King Immortal, Invisible, Whom no man hath seen or can see, but God the Heavenly Father who welcomes our prayers that our Lord reveals to us. The revelation from this point of view culminates in the Lord's Prayer. That is absolutely the best conceivable prayer and,

[7] *St. Luke*, xii, 14.

however evolution may proceed, that conception of God will never be superseded till fatherhood ceases to exist and children are grown like berries upon trees.

But here again our Lord's ideas can only be really appreciated in their original setting in His life. In His own communion with God we have them alive. His love of God was a flame caught by His disciples and passed from soul to soul down through the ages. Here we come, as sooner or later of course we were bound to do, to what is commonly called Mysticism. But it is to be observed that in this Mysticism, psychic experiences such as visions have a wholly subordinate place. In view of the recorded experiences of mystical writers, the absence of visions in the Gospel story is most remarkable. To judge from our Lord, what man gets from conscious communion with God is to be looked for not as some extra detached factor, but rather a factor multiplying his natural powers. The formula is not $(A + B + C \ldots) + X$, where X is the additional divine element, but $AX_1 + BX_2 + CX_3 \ldots$ where X_1, X_2, X_3 are functions of X. The love of God is none the less real because the psychology of it is not understood, and it is essential to man's true development. We see quickly enough by watching our children that their true nature is not given to them ready-made. They have to learn to be unselfish: it does not come without an effort. There is that in them from which they have to be redeemed, and this redemption cannot come from the world of sense. If they have such a stake in the purchasable world that they are wholly absorbed by it, their case is desperate. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man, a man *qua* rich man, a man occupied with riches, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He needs redemption, and redemption can only come to Him through the love of God. It is the fact that Christ's love of God kindled a flame of love which passed from heart to heart, that has made our Lord's moral teaching incomparably the most effectual of all the moral teaching the world has known.

This success of Christian morality is a fact on which John Locke lays stress in his essay on 'The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures.'

> 'We see how unsuccessful' (*i.e.* how unsuccessful in bringing home authoritivly to mankind a clear knowledge of their duty) 'the attempts of philosophers were before our Saviour's time.'
>
> '. . . . If anyone should think that out of the sayings of the wise heathens before our Saviour's time there might be a collection made of all those rules of morality, which are to be found in the Christian religion; yet this would not at all hinder, but that the world, nevertheless, stood as much in need of our Saviour, and the morality delivered by Him.'

And after all, until quite recently all that has been done in our western civilisation for beauty and truth and goodness has been done in the name of Christ.

At a meeting of the London School Board[9] Huxley once said that in his earlier experience of sickness and suffering he had found that the most effective helpers of the higher humanity were not the scientist or the philosopher, but 'the parson, and the sister, and the Bible woman.' And with regard to our own time we can say this, that it is plain to any careful observer that those who now fancy themselves to be acting independently of Christianity are, as a matter of fact, building on Christian foundations. Indeed, no man can at this stage of history build on any others: there are no others.

And now finally, in the light of all this, we turn again to the central figure of our Lord. Few details of His life have survived; but we can picture Him clearly enough, going about doing good, speaking as never man spoke, not ministered unto, but ministering and giving His life a ransom for many, and finally rising again from the dead. The exact form in which He rose may be a matter of dispute, but that He did rise there can be no doubt whatever.

There is no question but that He is unique in history. If we had a thousand times as many details of His life as we have, we should still have no logical proof of His sinlessness. But it was only natural that His disciples, after their experience of Him, of His life and death and resurrection, should think of Him as such. The human mind works that way. After a certain point affection becomes an all-or-none reaction. Love reaches a stage when it throws away its last reserve. We

[8] Locke defends this thesis at some length. *Collected Works* (ed. 1801) Vol. VII, pp. 139 ff.

[9] *Life*, Vol. I, p. 351.

have not forgotten the attempt made not long ago to distinguish between Jesus and Christ, the human historical Jesus and Christ, the divine ideal of perfection to which He gave rise. For abstract purposes of historical or philosophical analysis such an attempt may be useful. In practice, human mentality being what it is, the two fly together, and to keep them separated involves a psychological strain. The disciples could not think of their Master apart from God, or of God apart from their Master. Strict monotheists as they were, they could not keep Him our of their prayers. Neither can we. For us, as for them, the way to God lies through Jesus; and looking upon Him we see, as by a clear shaft of light, into the very heart of Divinity.

Definitions of His person or of His relation to the rest of the Divine are at the best temporary approximations, and must be taken as such. They cannot be understood apart from their historical setting. It is generally so with definitions. The word atom, for instance, is now a contradiction in terms, and can only be explained when we trace its origin to the time when scientists knew nothing of electrons and thought the atom indivisible. Descriptions change as reality is better understood.

Athanasius does his best, and better than Nestorius, though he too tries hard. We know in part and we prophesy in part. Jesus Himself remains, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. It is to learn to know Him, to love Him, to follow Him, to discover the meaning and scope of His principles by putting them into practice by the grace of God that comes to us through Him, that we are banded together in His Church. The Church, St. Paul says, is His body, and through it His work is being completed. The character and purposes of God will become progressively clearer as they are more and more adequately showed forth by the ever-increasing company of faithful people. And we look forward to a future that fades into the prophet's vision of an earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.[10]

[10] We ought now to go back and study the bearing of the death of Christ upon His revelation of God, but this great question must be reserved for a subsequent paper.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS

By the Rev. E. W. Barnes, Sc.D., F.R.S., Canon of Westminster.

OUR belief in the centrality of Jesus is primarily based upon certain facts of history and their reasonable interpretation. We will begin by stating, as simply as possible, some of the more important of these facts. They are generally admitted to be true and, it is suggested, form a sufficient basis for argument.

The most religiously-gifted race of antiquity had, during a thousand years or more, thrown up a succession of men of rare spiritual gifts. They gradually freed the national religion alike from immorality, from cruelty and from magic. They realised that there was one spiritual Power in the universe. The Creator and Sustainer of the whole they affirmed to be God, Who was Wisdom and Righteousness. To seek Him and to serve Him was, they taught, the essence of true religion.

The great creative epoch of Jewish religious thought is, at its best, represented in the literature known to us as the book of Isaiah. It ended during the Exile. Afterwards ritualism and agnosticism, Deism and apocalypticism, emerged to balance one another during centuries in which men had, in no small measure, lost confidence in the strong simple teaching of the great prophets and psalmists. And then Jesus of Nazareth appeared. He was a Jew in whom there was no Gentile blood; but He was brought up in the half Jewish, partly Syrian and partly Greek, environment of Galilee. His origin was humble. He came from a workman's home. It is unlikely that He had an exceptional education. Yet, though He normally spoke Aramaic, He could certainly read Hebrew and He probably knew Greek. Clearly His natural ability was great. We can safely infer from the Synoptic Gospels that He used language with the skill of a great artist in words. His insight into the minds of men was amazingly searching and sure. He had closely studied the writings of the greatest reli-

gious teachers of His race: He was responsive to the spiritual longings of His age. But His religious judgments were emphatically His own. With absolute freedom and confidence He would accept, reject or re-fashion views as to the nature of God which belonged to the Jewish tradition. Using the simplest words and pictures, so that His message was fit for the common people, He built up a clear, coherent system of theology. The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the kingdom of God, Eternal Life,—the whole purpose of man's existence as a creature of God was plainly set forth. The way in which the scheme was expounded showed that it was more than an intellectual construction. It was the interpretation by Jesus of human needs, longings and aspirations as He observed them in others and felt them in Himself. His own actions, His need of prayer and quiet meditation, His certainty that He could gain strength from prayer, the way in which He related all His teaching to the guidance of God and based it upon His sense of God's presence with Him—all show that there was a profound unity between His spiritual perceptions and their intellectual expression. The richness of His spiritual life was associated with rare psychical strength. His power to cure mental disorder was remarkable. His personality was extraordinarily impressive. Moreover, with His natural ability and spiritual confidence, there was combined a character of quite singular beauty. He apparently refused to admit that He was good as God is good: yet He was so different from normal men that those who knew Him best felt that His moral perfection was Divine rather than human. He seems to have been absolutely loyal to His spiritual perception. And He did not gain a limited self-mastery by avoiding life's difficulties and dangers. His public life was full of hardship. He endured poverty, faced the dangers of popularity and hostility, lived among outcasts without defilement, spoke readily with educated men who sought to entrap Him in His speech. His character was tested to the full; and He bore the test triumphantly. At the end, after a public ministry of brief duration, clerical Judaism found Him intolerable and encompassed His death. His spiritual greatness, His loyalty to God, that purity of heart, mind and spirit which pierced through

sham and shame as a flaming sword, brought Him to the Cross. He died . . .

Is He alive for evermore, God's perfect witness to Himself among men? This really is the question which we ask when we enquire whether His Person and work ought to be central in human religion. We do not affirm that the Lord's Person and work have been central in Christianity in the past. There is much to be said for the view that they were, from the end of the second century to the close of the Middle Ages, concealed beneath alien ideas derived from the mystery-religions; that the Reformation was the hammer which broke the husk within which, under God's providence, the kernel had been preserved during the decline and eclipse of European civilization. Christian belief and practice are still so varied and disappointing that we cannot contend that at present Jesus has attained effective centrality in the Christian churches or in what is called Christian civilization. But can we not say that, as religion grows in richness and purity, Jesus comes to His own? Is it not true that His influence, His power to mould thought and aspiration, will endure so long as humanity shall exist upon the earth? Is it credible that others will appear who will surpass Him as He surpasses saints and sages of history? In short, has God's anointed, the Messiah, come, 'or look we for another?'

Though it may be urged that man cannot have knowledge of such spiritual finality as Christians claim for Jesus, the objection does not seem to be reasonable. We may legitimately contend that, because man differs from all other animals in that he is aware of, and can create, spiritual values, there is in him something that adumbrates the nature of God. We say that man is not only a part of the evolutionary process. His highest attributes must serve to show its purpose. They reveal the nature and the end of God's plan. A right undertanding of man as he is ought to lead us to a knowledge of what the perfect man should be; and that knowledge should disclose the nature of God so far as His nature needs to be, or can be, grasped by humanity. Reason and intuition combine to justify the belief that our Lord had a right understanding of what man can become. The centrality of Jesus implies that He

gave a sufficient explanation of the spiritual reality to which man's moral and religious instincts are allied; and that, moreover, in Himself the perfection of moral purpose and religious insight was revealed. Thus it commits us to the view that, as man develops in the way predestined by God, he will continuously approach the standard set by Jesus. Jesus will ever more completely draw men and inspire them because they will the more fully understand that He explains them to themselves. In brief, human thought, as moulded by developed aspirations and accumulated knowledge, will not sweep past Jesus but will circle round Him as the centre where God revealed Himself.

We can only determine whether these contentions are sound by examining how far they are confirmed by our own consciousness and by the nature of man in general as it is revealed by the widest and most searching examination which we can make. Now, most certainly, the Gospel of Jesus continues to be 'good news' in that it gives substance to those hopes which are indubitably an essential element in human personality. Further, we are bound to allow that it is a creative force which is uniquely fertile and valuable because it urges man to progress along the natural and therefore God-ordained path of human development. Moreover, the Gospel cannot be separated from the Cross by which it was sealed. Man serves God and advances towards his divinely-appointed destiny by struggle and pain: and Jesus, in yielding up His life, gave all that a man can give to help others to do God's will. His Person and His Gospel cannot be split apart, for in life and death He was true to His message. He died that the Kingdom might come. We rightly deem Him Lord of the Kingdom of His Father because He was its perfect Servant. All who strive to enter profit by His service: they are to this extent enriched by the redemptive power of His innocent suffering. Since Jesus was crucified Christians have seen in the teaching of the second Isaiah a hint of the significance of His death. That hint they have sought to develop: and in their endeavour many, and sometimes deplorable, theories of the atonement have been advanced. Needless to say, no theory can be wholly satisfactory so long as the problem of evil remains unsolved. But if we agree that the purpose of creation was the ultimate evolution

of animals carrying spiritual consciousness, and so of human personality fit when purified for eternal communion with God, then it must be that love is the supreme spiritual principle of the whole process. The love of Jesus, suffering but triumphant, disclosed the essential nature of man's service to God; and, in its perfection, revealed the nature of God's response to that service. The Life which was consecrated on the Cross showed how man should love God and how God has purposed to give man Eternal Life through such love: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' Thus we conclude that Jesus was central as an example for mankind.

Can we say further that He was central as Redeemer and Saviour? I think that we are forced to do so if, and only if, we accept St. Paul's identification of the living Christ and the Holy Spirit. Did Jesus show Himself as the risen Lord after His death and burial? We cannot understand the history of the early Church unless this fact be admitted. The fact, moreover, is congruous with our expectations: with Du Bose I would say that the victor over sin was naturally the victor over death.[1] And, because we cannot for any practical purpose separate the risen Jesus from the Inner Light which is the source of all our religious experience, we identify the Lord with the Spirit.

Modern psychology has not yet reached a stage when we can confidently use its theories to re-state the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Incarnation. But it seems certain that there are in our minds regions below manifest consciousness where we receive suggestions from our fellows and whence, unwittingly it may be, we give out suggestions to them. Such

[1] The unifying element in personality is love, in the complete Christian sense of the word. At death the normal man is only in process of being made, and as an unfinished spirit must remain in time until his purification is ended. But if a finished perfected spirit were released from human limitations by death he would thereupon at once enjoy the fulness of eternal life. Since that life is outside time it is conceivable that such an one could reveal his presence as Jesus disclosed Himself after His resurrection. Herein we seem to reach the underlying thought of St. Paul when he associated sin with death: the restraints of death are restraints due to sin.

suggestions are believed to influence personality more profoundly than any rational process. It may well be that in these regions of the mind we receive divine grace: in them it may be that we have intercourse with the Holy Spirit. Mystics of all types and ages are agreed that such intercourse is impeded by sensuality and self-seeking. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' The purity and unselfishness of Jesus point to the conclusion that His consciousness was separated from God by no such barriers as exist in other men; and that, when after death His human limitations were transcended, the living Christ became one with the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit is God redeeming and saving, Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Saviour. 'He living cleanseth us from all sin.' He is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.'

The picture of the centrality of Jesus as thus presented is substantially that of St. Paul and St. John. Have we outgrown their thought? Well . . . religion is personal before it is corporate; or, if you like, it is a personal response to corporate understanding. In me the objective picture of Jesus portrayed by the synoptists kindles reverence and love. The subjective interpretation of Jesus made by the first builders of Christian theology I feel to be true: such spiritual understanding as I have leads me along the road they travelled. The authors of such a book as *The Beginnings of Christianity* appear to reach what we may not unfairly term rejective conclusions by an ingenuity of atomic disintegration which a physicist might envy. Yet, when the process ended, Jesus still lives, great and unexplained. St. Paul was more than an aggregate of the life-cells of which God secretly fashioned him: patient and painful dissection will not reveal the secret of his Master's personality.

I turn to another region of thought. Has the Paulo-Johannine affirmation[2] of the centrality of Jesus become incredible because we accept the enlarged view of the universe due to modern science? The New Testament writers thought that

[2] We must distinguish between the general affirmation and the Logos doctrine which is its particular expression in the Fourth Gospel. The values and implications of the latter the writer was not asked to discuss.

the earth was the centre of the universe: we know it to be a minor planet of a solar system which itself does not appear to be of especial importance among the millions which exist in stellar space. We have learnt that life has existed on the earth for at least a hundred million years and that we are the products of its evolution. The matter of which other suns are composed is not essentially different from that of our own solar system. It is most probable that there are numerous other planets where conditions are, or have been, favourable to the existence of life. We may reasonably infer that the earth is but one of many worlds where life exists: that on other planets of remote solar systems the living cell has led to the evolution of animals, possibly very different from ourselves in physical structure, yet carrying spiritual consciousness. We have to view the Incarnation in the light of such possibilities; and also to regard it, not as an event which happened some four or five thousand years after man's creation, but as a revelation of God vouchsafed to man after something like a million years of human existence.

Needless to say, facts like these are deemed by many to have seriously compromised the Christian claim. They probably lie behind the popular instinctive assumption that science has made the Christian faith incredible. But, if we examine them patiently, their supposed cogency disappears.

Jesus came in the fulness of time; and whether that fulness is to be measured by thousands or millions of years matters not at all. Our knowledge of humanity's past, hazy though it be, makes it certain that the stage of human development at which the work of Jesus could have been effective was reached within a few thousand years, at most, of His Advent. The idea on which the older theologians liked to insist, that Jesus came when the preparation for the Gospel was completed, is still entirely reasonable; and, even if we must multiply by a thousand the number of human beings who died before His Advent, we do not alter the nature of the old problem of their salvation through Jesus Christ.

As regards the issues raised by the possible existence of other inhabited worlds, our utter ignorance makes discussion largely fanciful. If life on other worlds has led to animals

with our spiritual understanding, with our certainty that there are in the Universe absolute values like goodness and truth which indicate the nature of God and are eternal with Him: if such animals know that they ought to be loyal to God and are hindered by manifold temptations: then, whatever be their physical structure, we may affirm that they were created that they might become finite spirits capable of eternal life with God, and that God will have provided for them some method of realizing their destiny. It is vain to speculate as to the means by which this grace will be given to those who need it under circumstances of which we know nothing. That throughout the universe He will accomplish His plan we may be assured. For us it suffices that on earth 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.' Far more important than any speculation is the fact that it is our duty to make ourselves worthy to receive the gift of Christ revealed in Jesus. If we recognize that duty we make Jesus central. We then acknowledge that the risen Lord has not only an earthly but a cosmic dominion, that in every place and for all time the power of His love will endure.

How shall we answer those who say that the gift of Christ is not worth having? We must first of all persuade them that sin is as terrible as Jesus declared it to be. He who overcomes, or is enabled to overcome, sin opens the gate to Eternal Life. Sin is the enemy of human progress, individual and racial. But to get men to accept Christ's view of sin and Christ's aid against sin we must emphasize that His standard of righteousness transcends that of the churches called by His name. We must, moreover, apply our minds to understand Him, give our lives to His service, that in ourselves the power of His Spirit may be manifest. Some are made angry by the severity of Christ's teaching with regard to sin and its punishment. They recoil, not merely from a misguided asceticism, but from the stern demand of loyalty to the God-given conscience. Swinburne deplored a world which had grown grey at the touch of the pale Galilean. In the light of recent experience one can say that the Christ-accepting world would be a better place than one striped scarlet and black. But a Christ-accepting world would not be grey. Fellowship based on spiritual freedom is Jesus'

ideal of human intercourse; and the ideal allows complete expression to man's finest creative impulses. If men sought to reveal the God of Jesus in all their corporate authority, they would of necessity surround themselves by beauty and joy as they tried to make life truly sacramental. The present degradation of human life is due to man's refusal to accept Christ's estimate of its values and duties. It will endure so long as the work and Person of Christ are refused their right place in human thought and aspiration.

Yet man will never be satisfied by failure. Religion is a necessity of his nature. As he reflects about himself, he asks Whence? and Whither? and Why? He feels the glory and the splendour and the mystery of the setting of life's stage. He is puzzled by the brevity of his sojourn here. He is oppressed by life's tragedies. He would know whence come the creative impulses which have made civilization, and will yet make it better than it is. He asks the meaning of the play in which he is perforce an actor. He feels the need of moral strength, seeks to give substance to his hopes, longs for perfect comradeship . . . To this bundle of questions and longings and aspirations, Jesus gives the complete response. That is why He is both central and universal.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS

By Nowell Smith, M.A., Headmaster of Sherborne.

WHEN I accepted an invitation to write a paper for this Conference on the Centrality of the Person and Work of Jesus, I had some qualms as to the meaning of the proposed title. But the Conference was a long way off: I wanted to bind myself to attendance in view of the conflicting claims which I knew would arise: and I hoped that, as time went on, the subject would shape itself more clearly to the mind's eye. I must confess that this hope has gone the way of most others of a similar character. It is the bare fact that hardly a day

has passed between that date and this on which I have not revolved the problem. Apart from the external *stimuli* of a busy life, I believe I have hardly thought of anything else: and such reading as I have done, outside professional studies and the ordinary perusal of current literature, has been almost entirely guided by the search for light upon this one subject. But the net result has been, I fear, nothing but a series of ἀπορίαι, of questions which I cannot answer, and an overwhelming sense of my own incompetence. The only apology which I can offer for such a lame conclusion to my own efforts is that these papers are intended as introductions to discussion, that discussion must begin from questions propounded but not answered, and that I hope I may suggest some questions for you to answer, if you can.

To begin with, the title of our subject to-day is, to my mind, much less easily intelligible than those of our other discussions. No such indefinite term as 'the Centrality' appears in any of them. The question which has troubled me all along and which puzzles me still is: What is the circle of which the Person and work of Jesus is (or is not) the centre? Is it the universe? Is it human history? Is it Christianity? Is it the individual believer? Is it the Church? Or is it, finally, the Church of England?—for both the Churchmen's Union and the *Modern Churchman* profess to be organs of the Church as conditioned by our national history and experience.

Now, it is obvious that all these circles may be concentric with the Person and work of Jesus as their common centre. Or again, since in any case in speaking of circles and centrality we are using metaphor, it may be that the Person and work of Jesus are central to some or each of them in a different sense to which they are central to others. But having indicated the ambiguity of the first term in our title, let me turn for a little to the rest of it—the Person and work of Jesus. These words, and put together in this phrase, are of course very familiar; and for that very reason, perhaps, it is all the more important that we should have as clear an idea as possible of the meaning we attach to them in our discussion, although I know that words which mean anything mean something different in some respects to any other words in which we attempt to

explain them. Now, by the Person of Jesus in this context we mean, I take it, what we very often call the 'historic Jesus,' the man Jesus of Nazareth, His character and personality. We may find it impossible to discuss our subject to any purpose without touching such conceptions as those of the Logos or the Ever-living Christ: but in speaking of the Person and work of Jesus I am not immediately and *ex hypothesi* concerned with Christology, any more than in an essay on the importance or influence of the person and work of Luther, let us say, or Shakespeare, I should necessarily be intending to discuss the question of personal immortality or of divine immanence. By the Person of Jesus, then, I mean Jesus in the same sense as I speak of Luther or Shakespeare as a historical personage with an individual character and life of his own: and I purposely take Shakespeare as one of my examples because, without having the slightest leaning towards the Baconian theory, I do feel that in the purely historical sense we know more about Jesus of Nazareth than we know about Shakespeare. I certainly have a much more vivid impression of His character and habits and the main preoccupation of His life—perhaps for the very reason that it was so simple; but whatever the cause, there is the fact as far as I am concerned.

Some Modernists, perhaps some who are here, would say: 'You have no right to talk of *knowing* Jesus in this way: what you mean is that you swallow in an uncritical spirit all the narratives of the Gospels.' No; I can assure them it is not so. I am cursed, or blessed, or shall we say simply possessed, with an incurably sceptical spirit, so much so that I very rarely feel able to make a positive statement of fact and rarely hear one without wondering what proportion of error it contains. But to be sceptical is not to be impervious to evidence: and one may be sceptical of the credulity of dogmatic agnosticism. I confess that the myth-theory of Christianity, if it extends to the denial of the historic existence of Jesus or even to the possibility of forming a real, if incomplete, portrait of His personality from the evidence of the New Testament, seems to me an extravagance hardly worth considering. That the Jesus of popular religion is largely a mythological figure I cannot doubt: nor can I doubt that Prof. Lake and others are right in arguing

that Gentile Christianity transformed the original tradition of the man Jesus by assimilating it to the tradition of the Saviour-Lords of the mystery religions. Again, I should be very sorry to have to try to reconstruct in any detail the historic portrait of Jesus, or to say exactly where history ends and mythology begins. To take one instance. The intervention of Dr. Rendall in our discussion on Tuesday was to me a valuable reminder that the problem of the Fourth Gospel is by no means so far settled as many of us probably suppose. So far as I, with my comparatively slight opportunities for these studies, have been able to form an opinion, I confess that the arguments for the Johannine or autoptic authorship, far from contemptible as they are, do not bridge over the gulf which seems to separate the Fourth from the Synoptic Gospels, nor remove the impression that the author of the Fourth is at least reading into our Lord's teaching much that the actual Jesus could not have said to his actual disciples. At the same time I cannot find it so easily credible as many people apparently do that the moral and spiritual prophet (if not genius) who composed that Gospel spent elaborate pains to invent the many statements of relatively unimportant fact, as to times and places, which that Gospel contains. The higher criticism of the Fourth Gospel is still to me a problem, not a *chose jugée*: and there I will leave it, as it is not our main subject, though certainly relevant to it.

My point so far is, then, that the Person of Jesus, the historic Jesus, is real and knowable in the ordinary sense; and if I have been labouring the thesis which Mr. Emmet has already put before you in clearer terms in the very first paper of the Conference, I must bear the blame for my treatment, but someone else for the over-lapping of subjects. As to the content of the portrait of Jesus which we can reasonably draw, I should be sorry, as I said, to have to try and describe it, and in any case it would be absurd to try in a short paper like this. For brevity's sake I would say that for our purpose to-day I would gladly acknowledge my belief in the general probability, as well as in very many of the particular touches, of Dr. Glover's well-known portrait in his books, *The Jesus of History* and *Jesus in the Experience of Men*. Someone has spoken at this

conference of the inadequacy of even the best expositions of the Sermon on the Mount: and no doubt Dr. Glover would be the first to understand me when I say that the original text of St. Mark, with all its fragmentariness and other imperfections and the questions it raises, seems to bring Jesus more vividly before me than all his wealth of illustration, his concentration of scattered hints upon his subject, his sympathetic guidance. But this is only to say that each of us must get our own impressions of the Gospels. Those impressions will, however, be likely to be much more powerful and enduring, if we have allowed our imaginations and sympathies to be quickened by wide reading, and especially by books like Dr. Glover's, with their strong and individual power.[1]

So much, then, for the moment, for the Person of Jesus: what of His work? Of course at once we must recognize the familiar truth that a man's work cannot in reality be altogether isolated from His person, though there are very varying degrees of identity between them. But this consideration, though so familiar, is, I think, peculiarly important in the case before us. What was, or is, the work of Jesus? I suppose that for many centuries the answer of almost all Christians might be summed up in the words Atonement and Salvation: and at the present time I imagine that such is the orthodox answer, though our divines are impelled by the necessities of changing thought to re-interpret those and similar theological terms. I am far from saying that re-interpretation is not legitimate and even necessary. We cannot invent a brand-new vocabulary every day; indeed, as we grow older we may find it hard work to keep up with the new words that are invented. At the same time, meanings of words do become obsolete. With the never-ceasing process of experience new ideas arise and old conceptions are transformed, and living and active thought is continually expressing itself in fresh terms and imagery. And there is a danger lest, in re-interpreting great words like Atonement and Salvation, we try to persuade ourselves and others that we are

[1] As a footnote I should like to call attention to this sentence on p. 135, of *Jesus in the Experience of Men:* 'Our weakness to-day is to be matter-of-fact; it is a tendency to concentrate on facts, to gather facts, but to hesitate about using them when they are acquired.'

really using the words in the same sense as St. Paul or St. John, or Jesus Himself. To trace the development of such an idea as that of Atonement and to restate the idea in current language are the fascinating tasks of the historian and the theologian: but in trying to express one's own opinions for what they are worth in what I may, perhaps, venture to call an unprofessional conference, it seems to me best to avoid as far as possible the use of technical terms, and not to be too careful to enquire whether one's language can be harmonized with that of the sixteenth or the fourth or any other century. Now, putting the matter as simply and briefly as I can, it seems to me that we must, in the first place, distinguish between three things, all of which might fairly be described as the work of Jesus. (1) What He set out to do and consciously did, His master-purpose in life. (2) What He actually did, whether of set purpose or not. (3) The subsequent consequences of what He did. I am afraid I cannot hit off each of these in a neat and rounded formula, but I will be as brief as I can.

(1) His master-purpose was to do the will of God, whom He conceived as His heavenly Father and the Father of all life. I do not suppose that He thought of God or of God's will in any systematized theory of metaphysic or ethics, like a philosopher. He was impelled, no doubt, to undertake his public ministry by an overmastering conviction that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and a longing to persuade the men and women whom He knew and loved to repent and believe the good news. But that was not the whole of His preoccupation. He believed that the end of the age was at hand—for I do not think we can cut out 'the eschatological Jesus' (to use a label for brevity) from our portrait. But it seems to me unreasonable to infer from that fact that He preached and practised an '*interims-ethik*.' The moral law or will of God was as absolute and eternal for Him as for Kant or any other idealist. And moreover, when He saw someone sick or sorry, He had faith in God's will to heal such a person without reference to any approaching catastrophe which, if He had been obsessed with the idea, would surely have made the present troubles of individuals seem petty and inconsiderable. As to the Passion and Death, it seems to me impossible to guess how long before-

hand He foresaw them. But His attitude towards them was governed by the master-purpose of His will, to do the will of God.

(2) What He actually did, besides carrying out this master-purpose, was, as St. Peter said, to 'go about doing good'—as He could not help doing, 'for God was with Him'; to teach and comfort and inspire in words and ways of which the Gospels preserve for us a wonderful, though no doubt fragmentary and sometimes perplexing, record; to impress people in general with an exceptional sense of power, a sense generally, no doubt, accompanied by admiration and love, but in certain quarters, for obvious reasons, by fear and hatred; to gather round Himself a little band of friends of a special intimacy, some of whom He called His 'messengers,' and who subsequently became the nucleus of the Christian community; finally, to suffer under Pontius Pilate.

Here you may say, 'Why not go on, "and to rise again the third day from the dead?"' Yes, and if I did, I should add, 'and is alive for evermore and is spiritually present with us always or, at least, when we are ready to receive Him.' But I stop at the crucifixion, not as denying the Resurrection or Eternal Life or the ever-living personality of Jesus (God forbid! I believe; God help my unbelief!), but because these matters which Popes and Councils have attempted to define, and for definitions of which men have fought and burned one another and split up into sects and parties innumerable, seem to me to involve so many terms and conceptions which I cannot grasp clearly enough to construct an intelligible, articulate, verbally communicable creed. Whatever the ultimate truth may be, I cannot think of all this under the category of what Jesus of Nazareth did or does. If I must put my thought crudely, it (whatever *it* is)—Resurrection, Atonement, Redemption—is what God did or does, and though, so far as I understand it, I assent to the proposition that Jesus is God, yet God in that proposition is to me an adjective. Whatever Jesus means by calling Himself Son of God, or by saying (if He did say) I and my Father are one, it is clear that He did not mean that He was identical, or (to use a metaphor again) co-extensive, with God.

I have left myself no time to say anything of (3) the subsequent consequences of what Jesus was and did: and indeed it would be impossible to say anything to much purpose without trying to sketch the history of Christianity or to summarize, perhaps, such a book as Dr. Glover's *Jesus in the Experience of Men*. Nor have I time left to return to our original question of the centrality of the person and work of Jesus. With regard to this I can only say that if centrality is only another, and intended to be a stronger, term for importance, I cannot imagine it practically possible to exaggerate the importance of the human life of Jesus, of that exhibition of faith in God as the loving Father, which is to me both the shortest and the most satisfying way of stating the significance of that life. But if something more closely related to the literal meaning of centrality is intended, I confess the question seems to me to be one of those which admit of no answer, because they are fundamentally unintelligible. What you make the centre of any system of thought depends upon what you construct around it. The only centre in a metaphysical sense which is, so to say, 'given' and not arbitrarily posited, is the centre of consciousness, the thinking self.

But not to end with what will, I fear, seem to many a mere verbal quibble, I imagine that the choice of this subject for this morning's discussion was mainly determined by the desire to counteract the supposed tendency of what Mr. Handley called 'disturbing' books, such as *The Beginnings of Christianity*, the tendency to relegate the Person and work of Jesus to the background or, shall we say, the wings of the picture. Now, I do not feel competent to criticize the *Beginnings of Christianity*, though I have read it. It is a big book, and it takes me a long time—several years—to read a big book and feel that I have in any real sense got hold of it. At the same time, I have a strong suspicion that, when the disturbance caused by the appearance of a book of this sort has subsided, it will be found that the main affirmations of the book represent a solid advance in the knowledge of the truth towards which the human spirit ever yearns, while some, perhaps, of the implied or supposed negations will 'fall into the dark backward and abysm of Time,' with other fragments of contemporary controversy. I

say this partly because it is surely true of most works of honest, patient and able intellectual effort: but partly also for the possibly less valid, but more personal reason that I find myself to a remarkable degree in accord with the attitude of Prof. Kirsopp Lake towards theology. It may not seem precisely relevant to this morning's subject, but it will perhaps help to explain my inability to treat that subject as no doubt many would wish it to be treated, if I conclude by reading a few sentences from Prof. Lake's *The Stewardship of Faith*, a book to me of most compelling sincerity and power.

> 'We believe that we can see that life is governed by purpose, and to that purpose we endeavour to make our wills subordinate; but we are conscious that its fullness, its origin and its end are outside the scope of our understanding. We are therefore not prepared to make the value of religion, which is our present possession, dependent on the correctness of our guesses at things outside the limitations of our knowledge. We cannot wholly explain the Universe, and we are weary of attempts to cover up the insufficiency of the intellect by a superabundance of words. We know that we are limited in our powers and narrow in our vision, but we seek in our better moments to develop that element in our personality which binds us to others and makes us work for the common good of all, even to the sacrifice of ourselves. We know that we develop this element, partly in our private life in which we stretch out our hands to that power in the universe which seems to be to us what we would fain be to our children, and partly in the corporate life in which we meet together with others. It is this side of life, and all that we gain from it, that we mean by religion; we know that in it we sometimes seem to approach more nearly than in any other way to reality, and to see through the veil of phenomena. The experience of it is the basis of religious life, and membership in the churches ought to depend on its possession.'[2]

This may, or may not, be Christianity. It certainly does not exhaust the meaning of that Protean word. But it is a genuine, if faint, modern analogue of the faith which burned so much more clearly, steadily and intensely in Jesus of Nazareth, whose life more than any other fact of history enables me to pray:

> Our Father which art in Heaven . . . .
> Thy Kingdom come,
> Thy will be done . . . .
> Deliver us from evil.

[2] *The Stewardship of Faith*, Kirsopp Lake (1915).

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

By Rev. H. D. A. Major, B.D., Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

OUR Lord's conception of Divine Sonship appears to have been twofold.

(1) First, He taught that all men are sons of God. Such indubitable sayings of His as, 'Ye are the children of the Highest' (Luke vi, 35): 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Matt. v, 48): 'Call no man your Father upon earth, for One is your Father which is in heaven' (Matt. xxiii, 9): the parable of the Prodigal Son, the command to His disciples to address God in prayer by the name of Father, make it quite clear that Jesus regarded all men as sons of God. This Divine Sonship may be called *natural sonship*, because it belongs to all men as men. It may also be called *moral and spiritual sonship*, because man possesses a nature which is essentially moral and spiritual, and it is by the possession of this moral and spiritual nature that he is a partaker of the Divine Nature, and it is this partaking of the Divine Nature which is the essential condition of Divine Sonship. It may also be called *potential sonship*, because this Divine Sonship is in man's case a dynamic rather than a static thing, and it is capable of immense development. That Jesus regarded Himself as sharing in this Divine Sonship which is common to all men seems clear from His declaration: 'Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother' (Mark iii, 35). When St. Luke traces back the human descent of Jesus to Adam, 'the son of God' (Luke iii, 38), he certainly indicates that Jesus shared in this Divine Sonship which is common to all mankind—a belief more clearly expressed by the author of *Hebrews* when he writes 'Since then the children (*i.e.* of God) are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself (Jesus, the Son of God) in like manner partook of the same . . . wherefore it behoved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren' (Heb. ii, 14—17). This Divine Sonship our Lord appears to have been conscious

of from childhood, if we accept as historical the saying Luke records Him as uttering in His thirteenth year in the Temple: 'Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?' (Luke ii, 49). What is potential for all other men was realized perfectly by Him.

(2) The second kind of Divine Sonship which Jesus was conscious of sharing may be called *Messianic Sonship*. The origin of this conception of Messianic Sonship is to be found in the history of Israel. From very early times the nation of Israel was regarded as Jehovah's son. The prophet Hosea ⁻es Jehovah declare: 'When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt' (xi, 1). This conception of Israel's Divine Sonship became concentrated in the person of the nation's king. From the time of the institution of the monarchy in Israel, the king was regarded as Jehovah's Son; His Anointed One or Messiah; His Vicegerent. This is the meaning of the term Son in Ps. ii, 7. 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' Hence it was the title given to the ideal king whom the nation awaited with tense expectancy.

Jesus believed Himself to be this Messianic Son of God. According to our earliest Gospel (St. Mark), it was not until His Baptism, when He was about thirty years old, that He became clearly conscious of His Messiahship. One of the profound problems of New Testament criticism is: What view exactly did Jesus take of His Messianic Sonship? We are helped to answer it by an examination of the titles given to Jesus. These titles as they appear in the New Testament seem to fall into three main classes.

(1) In the first class are purely Jewish Messianic titles, such as the Christ or Messiah, the Son of David, Son of God, the Son, the Beloved Son, the Son of Man, the Elect One, the Prophet, the Righteous and Holy One, the Servant of Jehovah.

(2) In the second class are the Greek Mystery Religion titles, such as the Lord,[1] the Lord Jesus, the Saviour.

(3) In the third class are the Greek metaphysical titles,[2] such

[1] I do not mean *Maran*, but ὁ Κύριος. For the Greek-speaking Jew ὁ Κύριος would mean Jehovah, but for the Greek-speaking Gentile it would mean the Head of a mystery cultus.

[2] These of course did not come directly from the Greek world into the Christian Church, but indirectly through the Jewish Wisdom literature.

as the Word or Logos, the Effulgence of the Divine Glory, the Image of the Divine Substance.

Of course there are others which can hardly be fitted into any of these three classes, such as the Faithful Witness of the persecuted Church of the Apocalypse; the Pleroma of the Godhead of the Church contending with Gnosticism; the beautiful mystical titles of the Fourth Gospel, such as the Fair Shepherd, the Light of the World, the True Vine, and so on. And not least significant is St. Paul's great Messianic title, 'The Lord, the Spirit' (Cor. iii, 17; *cf.* Rom. viii), which perhaps bridged the gulf between Jewish Messianic ideals and Greek religious thought.

We, however, are only concerned here with the first class of Messianic titles. These are purely Jewish, and they alone were used by our Lord of Himself or by others of Him in the days of His earthly ministry. Of these titles in the first class, three are significant for our purpose. The one which sounds the loftiest and most mysterious to modern ears is 'The Son of God.' Jesus accepted it publicly when it was used by the High Priest at His trial. This title we to-day are peculiarly liable to misunderstand. We are apt to take it either in a *physical* sense, or in a *metaphysical* sense. Let us be clear that it had on Jewish lips at this time only a *political* sense. 'The Son of God' is the king of the restored and extended Jewish monarchy, a wise, just and potent ruler of David's stock, who would subject the Gentile world to Israel.

When Jesus allowed this title to be used of Himself, did He regard His Messianic office as political? Most emphatically 'No.' Prof. Lake has done a real service to New Testament exegesis by emphasizing the anti-political character of our Lord's teaching in opposition to the political propaganda of the Zealots. Jesus regarded Himself as the Messiah; He believed Himself to be the Vicegerent of a kingdom, but He would have nothing to do with politics or the political conception of the Kingdom. He was as opposed to the political conception of the Kingdom as He was opposed to the economic conception of it. He rejected the temptation to grasp the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them as firmly as He did the temptation to turn stones into bread. Yet He believed

in a kingdom, of which He was Vicegerent. When the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus say before Pilate: 'My Kingdom is not of (ἐκ) this world, else would my servants fight': when St. Paul writes, 'The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost': both writers are, I believe, true to the essential conception of the Kingdom of God which Jesus strove to reveal, but which was misunderstood and misrepresented by many who heard Him. His conception of the Kingdom of God—and how extraordinarily original the conception was—is that God's Kingdom is not political and not economic, but a Kingdom of moral and spiritual values: values of which He alone grasped the full significance and which He alone could unveil to men. He was within that Kingdom: He was the Revealer of it: He knew its secret. The greatest outside the Kingdom was less than the least within it.

You may feel that I have given too much time to our Lord's conception of the Kingdom, but I regard His conception of the Kingdom as fundamental if we would understand the mind of Jesus. This moral and spiritual conception of the Kingdom is, as a modern Cambridge scholar affirms:

> 'So embodied in the texture of the Gospel narrative that it cannot be eliminated by any reasonable criticism, and is so essential to a complete account of the mind of Jesus that it cannot even be regarded as secondary.'[3]

Some will reply to this, there is much in the Gospels which contradicts it. I would only urge with Matthew Arnold that 'Jesus was above the heads of His reporters,' and I would add (1) that any presentation of the Kingdom which is not original and self-consistent is not at all likely to have been the conception of Jesus; (2) that His conception of the Kingdom was essentially moral and spiritual; (3) that we cannot rightly separate Jesus from His conception of the Kingdom; (4) that unless we grasp that conception aright we cannot estimate Him aright. Indeed, I would urge that the relationship of Jesus to God and to mankind can only be adequately and justly expressed in terms of the Kingdom. I am not at all sure that

[3] *Dominus Noster*, by Dr. C. A. Anderson Scott, p. 133.

we do not come sooner or later to Him—and so to God—only through the Kingdom.[4]

When, therefore, Jesus claimed or admitted the title Son of God, the relationship which He emphasized was not merely His relationship to God His Father, but His relationship to the Kingdom of God.

But there are two other Messianic titles which must be considered in estimating His relationship to God. These are the titles Son of Man and Servant of Jehovah.

Son of Man is a title full of ambiguity, yet it is of immense importance. Undoubtedly Jesus seems to have used this title of Himself, but what did He mean by it? The old view was that He meant that He was the Representative of the Human Race, all that St. Paul meant by the title the Second Adam. The new view is that the title is derived from Daniel vii, 13, and is used as in the Apocalyptic *Similitudes of Enoch*, to describe a pre-existent Heavenly Messiah living with the Ancient of Days in heaven and ready at the appointed hour to descend, attended by heavenly hosts, to inaugurate God's Kingdom on earth.

Now, although the title Son of Man is found in all the strata of the Gospel narratives, the majority of cases in which it is used are eschatological, and these refer to the triumph of Jesus after His Passion. Generally it may be said that He uses the title when He affirms His divine authority: His future ascendancy: the ultimate and absolute victory of His cause.

Does this mean that His conception of Himself is that of the Apocalyptists? His conception of Himself is no more that of the Jewish Apocalyptists, than His conception of the Kingdom is theirs. He uses their terms, but He fills them with a new content. What His use of the title Son of Man seems to indicate is that the future is His, and that under His

[4] I think that many a modern-minded man of 'the once born' type, begins by recognizing the moral and spiritual values in life; he then comes to Jesus Christ as the great exponent, both in His character and teaching, of those moral and spiritual values; and then he comes through Jesus to the Father. In other words, he comes through the Kingdom to God.

Father all moral and spiritual authority is given to Him in heaven and earth. Yet not at once: the Cross comes first.

This explains the use of the third Messianic title, the Servant of Jehovah. This title is derived from the Second Isaiah. It emphasizes the vicarious suffering of the Servant of the Lord. What or whom the prophet meant precisely by the Servant does not matter in this connection. As the primitive disciples identified Jesus with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah liii, so did Jesus Himself, as the Passion approached, without claiming the title Servant, identify His *rôle* with that of the Vicarious Sufferer.

> 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life, a ransom, for many.' (St. Mark x, 45).

What may we briefly conclude from this investigation? Jesus believed three things about Himself. First, He believed Himself to be the Messiah, the Revealer of the Kingdom of God. Secondly, He believed in the triumph of the Kingdom and that mankind would ultimately behold Him as the Divine Vicegerent and Judge of all. Thirdly, He believed that He must suffer and die to achieve the redemption of mankind from the forces opposed to the Kingdom of God.

For Jesus this Messianic Sonship is not so much a name of honour as a name of labour: it is not a call to glory, but a call to suffering; it demands entire self-sacrifice; it does not consist in assuming divine prerogatives, but acting in absolute obedience to His Father's will; He has not chosen it; God has called Him to it; 'I am sent' is His formula.

That Jesus had this consciousness of Messianic Sonship must, I think, be accepted by critical and historical students of Christian origins, notwithstanding the conclusions of Prof. Lake. It was His consciousness of Messiahship which gave Jesus that note of supreme spiritual and moral authority which marks His teaching and His character. He promulgates a new Divine Law: He pronounces forgiveness of sins: He recognizes the importance of His message and its inestimable worth: He feels Himself to stand in an unique relation to God and to mankind. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that He died for making this tremendous claim; but not before He had warned His judges that they should see Him coming as their Judge with divine authority and power.

I cannot feel that there is any imposture in this claim. Such sayings of Jesus as 'Why callest Thou me good?': 'That hour knoweth no man, not even the Son': 'To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give,' are not the speech of imposture. It may be urged, however, that there is madness in the claim. When we consider His character, the quality of His teaching and His influence on mankind, the hypothesis has little weight. Genius is there, but also a wonderful spirit of humanity and sanity.

Now, in conclusion, I wish to make a few plain statements, which some may think much too plain, but which honesty demands I should make, although caution might require me to avoid them.

First, let it be clearly realized that Jesus Himself did not claim to be the Son of God in a *physical*[5] sense such as the narratives of the Virgin Birth affirm, nor did He claim to be the Son of God in a *metaphysical* sense such as is required by the Nicene theology.[6] He claimed to be God's Son in a *moral* sense, in the sense in which all human beings are sons of God, *viz.* as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God and as capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts. He claimed also to be God's Son *Messianically*, the Hope of Israel, the Head of the Kingdom of God on earth. In His Messianic Sonship His position is unique, yet there is much that remains to be achieved in the way of service and suffering ere God's Kingdom can fully come on earth. Though Jesus sits on the throne of the Kingdom, others may sit on His right hand and on His left. The late Mr. W. T. Stead said (I believe with Cardinal Manning's approval) that we should achieve more for the Kingdom if each of us strove to be a Christ rather than a Christian.[7]

[5] By this I do not mean natural generation by a Divine parent as in the heathen myths.

[6] St. Mark and 'Q' make no affirmation of physical or metaphysical sonship to God, and they, rather than later narratives, demand the adhesion of the historian, especially if later documents not only differ in their statements from the earlier documents, but also contradict each other.

[7] Origen anticipated Mr. Stead by some seventeen centuries. 'On account of Him there have come to be many Christs in the world, even all who, like Him, loved righteousness and hated iniquity.' (*Contra Celsum* vi, 79).

There are two other questions I must not omit to answer. Did Jesus claim pre-existence and to possess pre-existent consciousness and knowledge? The Fourth Gospel answers 'Yes' quite clearly and firmly. Dare we answer 'No'? Wordsworth's *Ode to Immortality* teaches that every human infant brings this pre-existent knowledge with it into this world at its birth. It is an attractive thought, and many in the ancient and modern world have voiced it.[8] We cannot, I think, affirm absolutely that it is not so, but I think historically we must to-day be strong to declare (leaving the question of pre-existent consciousness unsettled) that the consciousness of Jesus was a full human consciousness, and that it was not supernatural or miraculous in any sense that cannot be attributed to a human personality. The consciousness of Jesus was conditioned just as ours is. It was subject to limitation and growth. His knowledge of God was dependent upon His moral loyalty to the Divine Will and His unswerving attitude of filial obedience and adoring love to His Heavenly Father.

Does the fact that He is the Son of God in this unique degree justify us in calling Him, as He is called in the Fourth Gospel, 'My God'? I would answer that the language of Devotion permits this, but such phraseology has not His direct sanction. It belongs not to the period of His earth life, but arose as the result of theological development.[9] Personally, I do not think He who said to His disciples, 'Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things that I say,' cares very much about what we call Him provided that we obey Him.[10] For Him, neither *physical* relationship nor *metaphysical* relationship to God or Man, but *moral* relationship is the supreme relationship: and certainly He who knows not Christ by name, but reflects in his relations to his fellow-men the spirit of service and sacrifice which are Christ's, is infinitely nearer to Christ than he who, though holding the most exalted views of Christ's

[8] Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, Origen, Vaughan the Silurian, Shelley, Sir Walter Scott, &c.

[9] 'Nevertheless, even he (St. Paul) does not speak of Christ as 'God,' or otherwise directly assert His Divinity.' Neither 2 Thess. i, 12, nor Romans ix, 5 is really an exception. Titus ii, 13 may be doubtful; see R.V. margin. (Dr. Anderson Scott in *Dominus Noster*, p. 182).

[10] I believe that those who obey Him must come in time to call Him 'Lord.'

Person, does not reflect His Spirit in his daily life. I know no better exposition of the Divine Sonship for the modern mind than is to be found in Tennyson's '*In Memoriam*'

> Strong Son of God, immortal love,
> Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove,
>
> Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood thou:
> Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills our ours, to make them thine.
>
> Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

CHRIST AS LOGOS AND SON OF GOD[1]

By the Very Rev. H. Rashdall, D.Litt., D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.B.A.,
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THERE is, I think, a growing demand that Liberal Theologians should say in quite definite terms what they really mean when they use the traditional language about the 'Divinity of Christ.' It is not easy to do this in twenty-five minutes, but I will try. I trust you will forgive the appearance of dogmatism which must be involved in such a summary statement of conclusions, without much argument or defence, as is possible under the conditions prescribed for the present discussion.

In the first place it will be well to enumerate some of the things which we do not and cannot mean by ascribing Divinity to Christ.

(1) Jesus did not claim Divinity for Himself. He may have called Himself, or more probably allowed Himself to be called, the Messiah or Son of God. But never in any critically well-attested sayings is there anything which suggests that His conscious relation to God was other than that of a man towards God—the attitude which He wished that all men should adopt towards God. The speeches of the Fourth Gospel, where they

[1] This paper is printed exactly as it was delivered.

go beyond the Synoptic conception, cannot be regarded as history, valuable as they may be for theology.[2] The doctrine of our Lord's divinity must be taken to express the Church's conception of what Jesus is or should be to His followers and to the world, not His own theory about Himself.

(2) It obviously follows from this admission that Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, as much so as any other human being, that He had not merely a human body, but a human soul, intellect, will.[3] This was not always recognized by the Church. Many of the earlier Greek fathers—Irenaeus, for instance, and Athanasius—obviously thought of Him simply as the Logos of God residing in a human body. Later councils condemned this position in the person of Apollinarius: from the point of view of later theology it cannot be too strongly asserted that Athanasius was an Apollinarian. And I fear a great many people who now think themselves particularly orthodox are really Apollinarians too. I have known quite advanced 'Catho-

[2] I do not know of any scholar, however orthodox and conservative, who affirms that the discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel are verbatim reports, or denies that they are more or less coloured by the ideas of the Evangelist. Their whole tone and style is obviously so different from that of the Synoptic Gospels, that if we accept the Synoptic discourses as substantially authentic (though not of course in every detail, for there are considerable discrepancies between them), it is impossible to regard the Johannine discourses as equally accurate reports: and even in this Gospel few sentences (when taken apart from the Preface, which does not pretend to represent the words of Jesus, and other comments of the Evangelist) imply actual 'Godhead' in the sense of post-Nicene theology. 'Is it not written in your law, I said (to the Judges of Israel) Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came . . . say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?' The claim to be the Son of God does not *necessarily* imply 'Godhead.' This requires to be still more remembered in the Synoptists. The Jews, however highly some of them may have exalted the Messiah, never thought of him as God or as equal with God. However close the union which the Christ of the Synoptists feels to exist between Himself and God, the distinction is always preserved. The claim that He would judge the world (if actually made) would not imply 'Godhead.' *cf.* Acts xvii, 31: 'A day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *the man* whom he hath ordained.' It is clear that till the Confession at Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus had not claimed to be the Messiah or Son of God, and (if we accept all the words subsequently said to have been uttered by Him) He never claimed more than this. Even Luke x, 22, though it implies a very high conception of His own Divine Mission, does not imply 'Godhead.'

[3] 'Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting' (*Athanasian Creed*). The last words are obviously explanatory of the term 'man.' The reasonable soul is the human soul.

lics'—not by any means stupid or ignorant people—who simply did not know that the Church teaches that Christ had a human soul. When a Sunday School teacher asks his class, 'Who was Jesus Christ?' and tries to elicit the answer, 'God,' without the addition of the all-important 'and man,' he too is teaching Apollinarianism. Much so-called orthodoxy is really Apollinarianism; and some defenders of the Catholic faith, who are too well informed to become downright Apollinarians, are really under the influence of that heresy in the later reduced form of it which denied that Christ had a human will. It is curious to note that that fiery *malleus hereticorum*, the Bishop of Zanzibar, quite definitely lapses into Monothelitism.

(3) It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine unless (with Origen) we say that all human souls exist before their birth into the world: but that is not the usually accepted Catholic position. St. Paul, indeed, believed in the pre-existence of the heavenly Messiah or Son of God—without distinguishing between the human and the divine or semi-divine Christ—but from the time when the Logos Christology was accepted by the Church, it has been held that what pre-existed was the divine Logos, not the human Jesus.

(4) The Divinity of Christ does not *necessarily* imply the Virgin Birth or any other miracle. The Virgin Birth, if it could be historically proved, would be no demonstration of Christ's Divinity, nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt upon that doctrine. The Synoptic Gospels, which do not assert the Divinity of Christ, do in their present form narrate the Virgin Birth. The Fourth Gospel, which does assert the Divinity of the Logos, knows nothing of the Virgin Birth.

(5) The Divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. Since the appearance of Bishop Gore's Bampton Lectures, it has been unnecessary to labour that point, though the doctrine of a limitation of Christ's knowledge has not yet sunk into the popular mind. We still hear the conclusions of the higher criticism refuted by appeals to our Lord's acquiescence in the common Jewish views about the authorship or date of Old Testament books. I must add that Bishop Gore himself does not push his admissions to anything like the point which is

imperatively demanded by an honest and critical study of the Gospel narratives. There is no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than His contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, than that He knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms.[4] And even if we reduce (as I personally am disposed to do) the genuine eschatological sayings to a minimum, it is difficult to deny that our Lord entertained some expectations about the future which history has not verified.[5]

So much for the negative side. In what sense do these admissions allow of our still attributing Divinity to Jesus, and finding a permanent meaning in the formulæ of the Creeds and the Councils? Everything turns upon our conception of the true relation between God and man in general—and that is a vast problem which it is impossible here to discuss. I can only say this much. If 'divine' and 'human' are thought of as mutually exclusive terms, if God is thought of as simply the Maker of man, if man is thought of as merely a machine or an animal having no community of nature with the universal Spirit who is the cause or source or 'ground' of the existence alike of Nature and of other spirits, then indeed it would be absurd to maintain that one human being, and one only, was both God and man at the same time. But such a view of the relation between God and man would not at the present day be accepted by any philosophy which finds any real place for God in its conception of the universe.

That man is not merely the creature and plaything of God, that there is a certain community of nature between God and man, that all human minds are reproductions 'in limited modes'

[4] This does not imply (as is sometimes suggested) that in the spiritual region He 'knew no more than an ordinary man.' The idea of Christ as the supreme Revealer of God obviously implies the contrary.

[5] Personally I think it probable that all the more definite statements about a 'coming again' and a supernatural Judgement in the immediate future are due to the ideas of the disciples rather than to Christ Himself, but it would be disastrous to make the Divinity of Christ depend upon a particular answer to this most difficult problem. We know that our Lord did not claim to know the date of the Judgement, but to contend that He never used any of the current Apocalyptic phrases suggestive of a date nearer than 1900 years would involve a somewhat drastic dealing with the documents.

(to use the expression of my old master, T. H. Green) of the Divine Mind, that in all true human thinking there is a reproduction of the Divine thought, and above all that in the highest ideals which the human conscience recognizes there is a revelation of the ideal eternally present in the Divine Mind—these are the pre-suppositions under which alone any real meaning can be given to the doctrine. All modern philosophers who recognize that the knowledge of God is possible are agreed that we can only attain such knowledge by thinking of Him in the light of the human mind at its highest. And philosophical teachers have not been slow to identify this view with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, however severely they may criticize the form which the doctrine has received in the traditional theology. Professor Pringle-Pattison, for instance, in his *Idea of God* (a work of which I would speak with profound admiration), has written:

> 'We are far too apt to mechanize the great doctrine of the Incarnation, which forms the centre of the Christian faith. Whatever else it may mean, it means at least this—that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine. "God manifest in the flesh" is a more profound philosophical truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and, for the greater glory of God, declares Him unknowable.[6]

He goes on to complain, as philosophers usually do, that this 'Incarnation of the Son has been limited to a single individual."[7]

I quite agree with him that it is impossible to maintain that God is fully incarnate in Christ and not incarnate at all in anyone else. On the other hand, the philosophical critics of theology do not, as it appears to me, recognize how spiritually valueless—nay, how ethically pernicious—such a doctrine becomes when God is thought of as incarnating Himself equally in all human beings, the worst as well as the best. If we say 'human nature is divine,' and stop there, we enter upon a line of thought which ends in the Hindoo theology or the very similar Absolutist philosophy which recognizes no cosmic significance in human morality, and places God 'beyond good and evil.' There is much in human nature which is not divine at all. It is just because it so emphatically negatives such a non-moral doctrine of divine immanence that the Christian doctrine

[6] *The Idea of God*, p. 157. [7] *Idem*, p. 409.

of a supreme Incarnation in *one* historical Person becomes so valuable. Professor Pringle-Pattison himself (who is no Absolutist, though he is too fond of Absolutist phrases which, I venture to think, do not express his real belief) recognizes that it is 'in the conditions of *the highest* human life that we have access as nowhere else to the inmost nature of the divine.' If we once recognize that it is especially in the moral consciousness at its highest, and in the lives which are most completely dominated by such a moral consciousness, that God is revealed, then it becomes possible to accept the doctrine that in a single human life God is revealed more completely than in any other. If we believe that every human soul reveals, reproduces, incarnates God *to some extent*; if we believe that in the great ethical teachers of mankind, the great religious personalities, the founders, the reformers of religions, the heroes, the prophets, the saints, God is more fully revealed than in other men: if we believe that up to the coming of Christ there had been a gradual, continuous, and on the whole progressive revelation of God (especially, though by no means exclusively, in the development of Jewish Monotheism), then it becomes possible to believe that in one Man the self-revelation of God has been signal, supreme, unique. That we are justified in thinking of God as like Christ, that the character and teaching of Christ contains the fullest disclosure both of the character of God Himself and of His will for man—that is (so far as so momentous a truth can be summed up in a few words) the true meaning for us of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity.

Such at bottom is the permanent meaning of that doctrine of the Logos and the Holy Trinity in which this conviction clothed itself under the influence of Greek philosophical conceptions and terminology. The doctrine of the Logos grew up at a time when the Neo-platonic idea of the transcendence of God, His aloofness from the world, His inaccessibility to human thought or effort, had been pushed to a point which made it seem impossible that He should express Himself in created things or created minds without some sort of intermediary. The Reason or Thought or Word of God—the thought concept, be it remembered, rather than the spoken word—was conceived of as such an intermediary. God gave birth

to the Logos and the Logos gave birth to the world. In the books of Proverbs and Wisdom the Logos, or rather the Wisdom of God (which is practically the same conception) is personified in a semi-poetic manner as the Assessor who stood at God's right hand in the creation of the universe. In the Alexandian Jew Philo the idea becomes more metaphysical. Practically everything that is said of the Word or the Son in the Fourth Gospel is said of the Logos in Philo, except his incarnation in the historic Jesus. In Philo the conception of the Logos has no connexion at all with the Messianic idea. That is the original thought of the Fourth Gospel—the master-stroke of its author's genius. But St. Paul, by attributing to Jesus all that the Apocalyptists had said about the heavenly Son of God or Messiah, had reached along another path much the same conception of the Messiah as the fourth Evangelist expressed by saying that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And the Johannine doctrine had great advantages over the Pauline. It was much less associated with Apocalyptic mythology. It made it possible to admit that the human Jesus had a beginning in time like other men, and to confine pre-existence to the divine element in the historic Personality. Moreover, instead of presenting Christ as a semi-divine being hovering between the divine and the human, it enabled the theologian to say frankly that that in Jesus which was human was absolutely human, while that in Him which was divine was absolutely divine. There remained, indeed, the problem of the relation between this 'Word' which was God and yet incarnate in the human Jesus, and the Father-God, whose only-begotten Son He was. Was this Word personal or impersonal? If personal, how can we escape Polytheism? And if the Logos be identified with the one God, what becomes of the distinction between Father and Logos? I cannot here sketch the history of that long controversy out of which the orthodox Christology was eventually evolved, but I should like to note two or three points which are valuable for the modern re-interpretation of the doctrine.

(1) In the more philosophical Fathers such as Justin, and above all Origen, it was quite distinctly admitted that the Logos was not united to Jesus alone. He had dwelt in the prophets.

He had inspired Socrates and Plato. It was asserted only that the incarnation in Jesus was something supreme and unique.[8]

(2) Many of the earlier Fathers did quite definitely tend to think of the Logos as a distinct personality—a separate mind, will, centre of consciousness from the Father: the Son before the incarnation was thought of as related to the Father very much as, for an intelligent pagan, Apollo was related to Zeus; but the more distinct the personality, the more definite also is the subordination. When Athanasius made the Divine Son equal to the Father, co-eternal, 'of the substance of the Father,' he was distinctly an innovator, but an innovator who saved the Church from the Polytheism into which it was drifting. In making the distinction between the Father and the Logos a distinction within the nature of the one Divine Being, he prepared the way for a more philosophical and genuinely monotheistic interpretation of the Logos doctrine and of that doctrine of the Trinity which had grown out of it.

(3) In St. Augustine, and still more distinctly in St. Thomas Aquinas and the Schoolmen generally, it becomes evident that nothing is left of that older conception of Christ as a distinct, a 'second' and inferior God which is found in Justin and the earlier fathers. The Logos now becomes not a separate mind, but a distinguishable activity of the one and only Divine Mind. The Son is the Wisdom of God, as the Father is His Power and the Holy Ghost His Love, and the three constitute 'One Mind.' It is difficult to say what Tertullian originally meant when he first introduced the fatal term 'Persons' as the name for these distinctions within the Divine Mind, but it is evident the term 'Person' is now (in Augustine and St. Thomas) used in a very technical sense and a sense quite different from that in which it is used either in popular speech or in the language of

[8] Here are two illustrations of Origen's Christology:

'We say that the Logos was united and made one with the soul of Jesus in a far higher degree than any other soul, seeing that He alone was able completely to receive the highest participation in the true Word and the true Wisdom and the true Righteousness.' (*Contra Celsum* v, 39: Lommatzsch xix, 241).

'They see that from Him the divine and the human nature began to be united (lit. woven together) so that human nature might become divine by participation in the more divine, not in Jesus alone but also in all those who not only believe but also take up the life which Jesus taught.' (*Contra Celsum* iii, 28; Lommatzsch xviii, 27).

modern philosophy. It cannot be too emphatically asserted that, when traditionalists like Canon Mason, and even philosophical and rational theologians like Canon Peter Green, speak of the three 'Persons' of the Trinity as three minds or centres of consciousness and frankly deny that God is One Mind, it is they and not those whom they criticize who are heretics from the standpoint of Augustinian and scholastic orthodoxy. To St. Thomas, as to the ordinary modern philosopher, their position would have been Tritheism, pure and simple.

There is undoubtedly much in the fully-developed scholastic doctrine, and still more in the earlier theology out of which it grew, which is of no intrinsic value at the present day. All of it requires translation into the language of modern thought and some of it, it must be frankly confessed, almost defies such translation. The conception of the Logos taken by itself, apart from its Christian application, is one for which modern philosophy has no use. But that does not prevent our seeing in the fully-developed doctrine of the Person of Christ the expression in the language of a bye-gone philosophy of that which still is—and, I believe, always will be—the central truth of Christianity, *viz.* that in the life and character, the teaching and the Personality of Jesus Christ the world has received its highest revelation of God, a revelation, however, which is still being continued and further developed by the work of God's Spirit in other human minds, and particularly in the society of Christ's followers.

That is, at bottom, I believe, what we mean when we speak of the Divinity of Christ. To justify the central position which it ascribes to Jesus in the religous history of the world would require an elaborate examination of the teaching and life of Jesus, and the comparison of His religion with other religions and other systems of religious and moral teaching. And yet after all the truth of such a conception could not be in the ordinary sense 'proved.' The truth of a moral ideal is a matter of immediate judgment. The doctrine of a supreme revelation of God in Christ must ultimately rest upon the affirmation of the moral consciousness that in its essential principles that moral ideal which is most fully incarnated in Christ's teaching and His life is still the truest and the highest that we know.

JESUS AS BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE

By Professor J. F. Bethune-Baker, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge.

OUR subject this morning is Jesus as 'both human and divine,' or, as I should prefer to put it, 'the God-man.' We do not ask the old question, *Cur Deus homo?* nor even 'How *can* this be?' But, accepting the fact of the *Deus homo*, we only ask: How was it, how is it so? What were the conditions of the synthesis? How is it related to the facts of our experience, and what does it mean to us? To clear the ground I would start with two or three premisses, and the first of them is that 'orthodoxy,' in beginning with God, began at the wrong end.

The personality of Jesus is for religion, and for science properly so-called, a perennial problem. The Christian who consciously looks to Him as Redeemer and Lord and Judge can leave the problem alone or acquiesce in the general opinion of his Church, clear-cut in expression but very vague in sense.

All Christian doctrine grows out of the puzzlement felt by the first generation of Christians. They knew He was a man in outward appearance and life, but there was something more which baffled them, and the doctrine that He was God as well as man was an early result of reflection on the facts of their actual experience.

In a recent controversy across the water, one of the protagonists said that he recognized the fact that Jesus was man as well as God, but it didn't interest him: all he cared to know was how He was more than man.

That was indeed the question which preoccupied the early Church—to such a degree that the manhood more and more receded behind the Godhead. Christian thought tended to begin at the unknown end. It was a Divine Person who had come into the world. God had been born as man, without ceasing to be what He was before. This point of view presents us with a hopeless tangle of problems. To-day, when in every department of investigation we begin with the relatively known and reason from what we find there to the unknown, it is Jesus

as Man in His life in the world that we want to take as our starting point once again—as at the outset He was. That is what gives our modern study of Gospels and Gospel history its interest and importance. We know He was human, we believe He was also divine. It is by finding out how He was man—what He was in His place in the historic process—that we may come to understand in what sense He was and is also God.

Parenthetically I would say: We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His personality was not human, but divine. To our modern categories of thought such a statement is a denial of the doctrine of the Incarnation. There is for us no such thing as human nature apart from human personality: the distinction that He was Man but not 'a' man, while it has deep religious value,[1] has ceased to be tenable. The personality of Jesus is human—He is 'whole' man even for Chalcedon: it is also divine for Christian faith and consciousness in all ages.

The question is one, primarily, for historical investigation. In this historical investigation I can make no use of the traditional beliefs in either His miraculous birth or His personal pre-existence. Both beliefs, no doubt, are of high religious value which Christianity must conserve. The former, like all docetic theories, stands for the fact of something 'new' in human experience; but we know enough of the order of Nature now to discredit the ancient idea that the new can only come about by a break in the continuity of the order of Nature, and I can only regard this idea of miraculous birth as aetiological and honorific—in those days as natural and reasonable a way of accounting for a great personality and the experience of which Jesus was the cause and the centre, as it would be un-

[1] What I have in mind as the religious value, the truth, of this old distinction is retained and even enhanced for 'modernists' in the modern emphasis on the fulness of our Lord's humanity. For what is meant is that Jesus does not stand alone as 'a' man might be thought to stand, isolated from his fellows. He is one of them among them. He is identified with the whole experience of the race, within it, not outside it as an individual by himself. He is a member of the group, the family, of men, not separated and not separable from it. So like Adam He is representative—the one of the old, the other of the new, moral life of mankind. Without breach in continuity or solidarity a new character is given to the race, a new racial unity is established: a new type, to become endemic and spread its contagion through the whole race.

natural and irrational[2] to-day. The latter belief, which is itself an inference from belief in His Godhead, suggests to us that what was made manifest in the personality and life of Jesus was a manifestation in space and time of a reality super-temporal, super-historic. I shall return to this point at the end of my paper.

We must first get our basis in the historical conditions of the manifestation itself, the conditions precedent and actual; and though I have little to add to what Mr. Emmet said, I must say it in my own way.

The conditions precedent include the facts of the whole of the long life-history of man, but more particularly the special cultural history of the race to which Jesus *κατὰ σάρκα* belonged —all his own inheritance of national religion and ideas of psalmists, prophets and apocalyptists, which formed the *substratum* of His own personal conscious experience. I am quite willing to use the term 'subconsciousness' instead of *substratum* if it be understood that this subconsciousness is thoroughly natural and human. He came into the world with this inheritance, or at any rate it fashioned Him from the moment of His birth and provided the channels of His thought, even though He might cut some new ones or divert and give a new direction to the old.

If we give full weight to this cultural inheritance as it is known to us to-day, we find in Jesus a newness and originality of thought which is selective and evolutionary, showing that He was on a higher plane and carrying us with Him, in the manner of the saying attributed to Him about the Law, 'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' By His rejection of some old ideas and the emphasis of His selection, He becomes the creator of something new in the history of religion: a new conception of God and of man and of the relations existing ('potentially,' perhaps, but that is to say for all religion *really* exist-

[2] The writer of this paper was asked what he meant in this connection by 'irrational,' and replied that he should call a belief 'irrational' in any age if it could not be related to the generally accepted *Welt-anschauung* of the period or the knowledge or best thought or theory with regard to the matter in question at the particular time. Such a belief might therefore be rational at one time and irrational at another, according to its cultural or scientific *milieu*.

ing) between them, of the essential character of God and the meaning and purpose of human life.

He was conscious of this newness. He was the first man to know God as He really is. To others discoveries have come, conceived by them as revelations of reality or truth, granted, given: they have heard the authentic voice or seen things as they are. Often they are eager to tell the world, they must 'give' to others what has been 'given' to them: but the world is dull of hearing, and only a few will listen. Jesus does not stand alone in this respect: He casts a kind of halo on a great company before Him and after Him. In the history of human thought there are instances of men who have made discoveries that remain for ever associated with their names: through them 'truth,' the reality of the things in question, was revealed to the world.

Jesus was also conscious of 'mission.' He had been chosen by God to be the first man to know Him and reveal Him to others, and manifest in His own person God's character and purpose by the tenour and purpose of His own life. His sense of mission grew through the course of His own experience more specialized. Nothing was to be allowed to interfere with His fulfilment of this mission. This is a high estimate of self—His significance and His life—in relation to God and to man and the world. He has in His own esteem a unique part to play in the ever-moving Drama of the Ages and a central position in the mind and purpose of God.

Is this consciousness of self other than human? It is to the human environment, the relatively known, that we must look first. *Causae non sunt multiplicandae praeter necessitatem.* Is a really new factor necessary to produce and account for this kind of consciousness?

When Marcion's docetic view of the Redeemer was met by the objection that by those who saw Him He was regarded as a man, he is said to have replied, '*satis erat illi conscientia sua*' (Tert. *de carne*, 3)—'His own knowledge of Himself was enough for Him.' Marcion meant He knew He wasn't a man. But even when the docetic theory was excluded, the great exponents of doctrine and Christians in general have assumed that He was conscious of Himself as divine. He knew that

He was God: and our ecclesiastical theory of the Incarnation and interpretation of the Gospels proceeds on this assumption. I do not think it is in any way *either* justified by the evidence *or* required by the logic of the doctrine. I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God. Nor do I think that even the Fourth Gospel so represents Him: else, to cite one passage only, it would hardly have admitted the message sent through Mary to His brethren, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God' (Jn. xx, 17).

Consciousness of being God was not one of the conditions of the *Deus homo*. The whole content of His consciousness is rightly styled 'unique,' but it is human. There is no saying or act certainly His, and I think none in the Synoptic Gospels (if we except the narratives of the Nature Miracles) that could not come from a man of His lineage and convictions—the convictions themselves being only 'unique' in degree.

I think this reading of the facts has won fairly wide recognition among students to-day, who are no longer hypnotized by orthodox presuppositions. If we are to work with the orthodox theory of the Incarnation, I am sure we can only do so by making use of the conception of κένωσις to the full extent: the pre-existent Person must have so limited not only His power, but also His consciousness, as to be able to pass through the normal process of human life. He must have put so complete a restraint on memory that it could only act subconsciously without His being aware of His own prehistoric existence and life.

In my own thought on the subject I have occupied this position and expressed it, for example, in the prelection which begins and in the sermon which ends my little book on *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed*. But it is undoubtedly exposed to many of the objections brought against all *kenotic* theories, such as are marshalled in massive array in A. B. Bruce's book *The Humiliation of Christ*. And though it represents the utmost concession that orthodoxy can make to modernist demands, or the nearest approximation that tradition strictly interpreted can reach in its always unwilling, but always inevitable, attempt to come to terms with the thought of successive

ages, I do not think it can be a permanently satisfying solution of the problem. It can only be a bridge from the past to the present, and we ought perhaps to be content if most of our friends get on to it and stay there safely, refusing to follow the more active among us who are exploring the country beyond: that country which seems to promise us a habitation more permanent and a climate in which we can breathe more freely and win our souls by a venture costly, perhaps, but not to be refused by us. We do not expect a land flowing with milk and honey, and the Jericho whose walls have already fallen is behind us, though some are trying to build them again.

It is not, I am sure, to any theory of depotentiation of God that we can look to give us the conditions under which we can explain Jesus as both human and divine—the fact of the *Deus homo*. Nor could we hope to justify the theory from the mere facts of His life in the world apart from the experience known to us as the Resurrection and all that followed it. But when we attempt to place Him in the light of all our knowledge of what had been before and what has been since, and see exhibited in Him the real relations between God and man and the key to the riddle of reality—and this is what the philosophy of the Incarnation sees in Him—then we are able to say what His being both divine and human means.

The primary and fundamental condition is the fact that the being of God and the being of man are indissolubly interrelated. We are familiar with the idea of the 'eternal' generation of the Son (*ἀεὶ γεννᾷ τὸν υἱὸν ὁ πατήρ*). We have to apply the same conception to what we call the created world of finite intelligences. The Creator is not separated from His creatures: they do not exist apart from Him. They have their origin in the will and love of God: they are the counterparts of that will and love, as necessary to the existence of God as He is to theirs. Neither is complete without the other. Language almost fails us, but God is always being actualized, fulfilled, expressed in man, and man only comes to full consciousness—the fulness of his potentiality—in God. It is not only that 'in Him we live and move and have our being,' but also, however much bigger His being may be, it is true that 'in us He lives and moves and has His being.'

Of course we cannot appeal to our Lord's own words for more than hints of such an idea. But assuredly also we cannot for any of the forms the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation has assumed. What is much more to the point is that it is He and His life—His experience as man in the world, His consciousness of Himself so far as we can read it with the new consciousness in us which He created—that suggests it. And though we can quote none of the standard expressions of Catholic doctrine for it, there has been much Christian thought that tends to support the belief that the historic process of human experience—to use modern terms—is in some real sense God's own experience. He is the subject of it as well as we. We do not, I say, get much help from our technical statements of doctrine. Our technical definitions are frankly dualistic. They treat God and man as two distinct real existences ('substances'), each with its own special characteristics, which are incapable of being blended or fused into one, though in Jesus Christ they are so brought together and intimately related to each other that a 'union' of both can be spoken of.

A form of sound words is obtained by placing the centre of union in His person conceived of as prehistoric and divine and possessing a miraculous unifying power of holding together two distinct and disparate realities and becoming the subject of two sets of experiences which yet remain, in themselves, incongruous even while concurrent. This is to say, it is not professed that the experiences themselves are unified. The subject is one, but two distinct spheres of consciousness remain. And the fact that the unity conceived is beyond words and reason is registered by the decision for two wills and the rejection of the idea of one divine-human activity (*θεανδρικὴ ἐνέργεια*), as conceived by Dionysius the Areopagite and the Severians of the sixth century.

Our popular theology is indeed here in better case, and in this fact lies our better hope for the future. When we put all our traditional documents into their place in the archives of our religion for the use of our students only, to show them how things have come to be what they are, to help them to get historical perspective: and when we go out into the market-place and speak with the man in the street, we are much more

likely to be able to come to terms with him than we are with orthodoxy. Of course he thinks that God and man are distinct —very properly (the dualism of our definitions is practically sound: the trouble is that they make this practical dualism theoretic): but the man in the street is familiar with the belief that somehow or other Jesus Christ was both God and man, and he knows that he himself has much in common with Jesus as depicted in His life in the world, and is ready to believe that the something in himself of which he is at least dimly conscious as a 'not himself'—which he discerns in Jesus raised, as it were, to its highest power—may be at once really himself and God. He is in a position by no means to bring Jesus down to his own level, but to understand that he really has kinship with Him even in that something in virtue of which Christians style Him 'Lord' and 'God.'

It has always been the life-blood of common Christian religion that union with God was possible for man in and through Jesus, whether thought has rested primarily on what He did for us, or rather on what He was and is; and side by side with the thought of Him as Redeemer has run that of Revealer and Consummator. And in spite of the dichotomies of technical theology, some of the great theologians themselves who gave their minds to the question: How could these things be? found the answer in the fact that God was not only the source, but the continuous potency of man's life and being—the ground of his natural life as well as of the new life made possible for him by the Incarnation. The conception remains vague and attention is concentrated on the far-reaching and revolutionary effects of the Incarnation in renewing man and opening out to him the path to his true destiny from which he had strayed. But when we use modern language and conceive of God as at once immanent and transcendent, and of personality in each of us as conditioned by and a reflection of the reality which is God: when we find the root of our personality in God, the infinite reservoir of consciousness from which our own trickling streams are drawn and fed, reservoir of all that we know as true and beautiful and good in instinct and purpose and achievement: then we recognize kinship with Him, kinship of very life and being, whether by His own *fiat*, or the gift of His love,

or the eternal necessity of His being. We may go on contrasting our nature and His, and using the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, but in us—in our persons—there is already the supernatural blended with the natural, there is the suggestion of an Incarnation.

Baron Friedrich von Hügel is thinking on these lines. In an address given to junior members of the University of Oxford last year and published in the *Constructive Quarterly*, December, 1920, under the title, 'Christianity and the Supernatural,' he was at pains to bring home to his readers belief in 'the natural-supernatural character of human experience as a whole,' and (as I understand) to suggest that we have in Jesus, the Christ, 'the supreme concrete example' of such a natural-supernatural experience, so that apprehending, as we must, that 'the supernatural endowment is very unequal amongst men,' we find that there exists in this 'one particular human mind and will' 'one supremely rich, uniquely intimate union with God.' 'In this genuinely human mind and will, the series of all possible supernatural experience by man . . . reaches its implied goal and centre.' And he writes of 'a reality distinct from the apprehender, and yet a reality sufficiently like the human spirit, when thus supernaturally sustained and sublimated, to be recognized by this human spirit . . . as its living source, support, and end.'

Or again, 'Jesus . . . is declared to hold in His human mind and will as much of God, of God pure, as human nature, at its best and when most completely supernaturalized, can be made by God to hold, whilst remaining genuine human nature still. And yet this same Jesus (though in this supremely heightened sense the Christ) remains thus also truly Jesus—that is, a human mind and human will bound to a human body, to sense stimulation, to history and institutions, to succession, time and space. He can thus be our Master and our Model, our Refuge and our Rest.'

That is a statement of one of the finest and most Christian minds of to-day. I find the conception of the Incarnation expressed in it essentially in harmony with the line of thought I have been following in this paper, and have expressed in other words in my little book, *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed.*

It is, I think, only from the point of view of the natural and supernatural as already blended in the being and life of man, that we can attach meaning to the idea and the fact of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God, the supreme example of man in conscious dependence on and union with the source and stay of his life, finding the fulness of his personal potentialities —the realization of Himself—by losing Himself in God, by persistent identification of thought, feeling, purpose, activity, with the highest, most pure and beneficent that man had conceived, and by that very process carrying the achievement of the race a stage farther on, and by His personal attainment creating in the long history of human experience a new type of human personality in which we discern, as we could not otherwise have known it, the fulfilment of a design which aims at not simply throwing up from time to time an individual like Him, but producing a world-wide society of human persons fashioned after that type.

Along these lines of thought we have the Catholic and common conviction that Jesus was ἄνθρωπος τέλειος, the actualized ideal of man, man at the end of his evolution, complete; not that the manhood has been deified, nor yet again dehumanized (thoughts so abhorrent to Nestorius), but in virtue of its constitution *capax Dei.* And again, we have the substance of the Pauline thought of the summing up of all things in Christ which the insight of Irenaeus seized on and emphasized before Christian piety had fully recoiled from the plain facts of the Gospel history as to the ' limitations ' of the manhood.

All these convictions of course work with the idea of life as rational, with a purpose in view, an end to be attained, which is pictured as the will of a supreme personal intelligence. They are positive convictions and a complete negation of Hardy's idea of an unconscious will of the universe blindly at work, struggling in the dark, with just a possibility of attaining consciousness of beneficent purpose and goal and means to the end. On the other hand, they do not exclude the idea of a God who, in willing the world and personal intelligences and wills that were to be faint copies of His own, capable of conflicting with each other and with His, willed struggle for Himself and them. He ' created ' difficulties for Himself and them.

The idea of a prime Mover Himself unmoved, or of a God within whose Being there is nothing analogous to the insurgencies of human affections and emotions, is not Christian, though many Christians have had it.

The one and the many of non-Christian philosophy from the beginning until now meet in the God-Man reality implied in the fact of the Incarnation and the doctrine of the Trinity. Personality is something not in essence singular, but plural. Reality is represented ultimately by the Pauline 'All in All' (*πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*)—a plural phrase.

I think I have said enough now for the purpose of discussion; but you will expect something more than I have said about the traditional doctrine of the 'personal pre-existence' of our Lord. For St. Paul, who seems to have believed in an ideal man or Messiah, stored away in the heavens, to be manifested in due season on earth, the conception was a natural, almost unconscious, inference from his belief that Jesus was Messiah. Those categories have no obvious relevance to knowledge and thought to-day.

Again, to early Christian religiosity, with its background of angels and daemons, its world of physics in which there was nothing that could not happen because no one knew how or why anything happened, the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus was an almost inevitable inference from the belief in His Godhead—an inference from an inference. God had sent His Son into the world to save it, and the Son had come of His own free will. 'He loved me and gave Himself for me': that is the authentic note of Christian faith and experience. And nothing can ever more convincingly commend to us the concept of God as Love than this picture of Father and Son alike and together agreeing in the great redeeming purpose and action. Any doctrine that can claim to be Christian must safeguard the conviction that the activity of redeeming love—the action of sacrifice—is the very centre of reality.

It is difficult to translate this picture into scientific theology without becoming tritheistic. Recently Dr. Tennant has trenchantly exposed this difficulty in two articles in the *Constructive Quarterly* (June and September, 1920). His conception of personality (like Dr. McTaggart's in his article in Hast-

ings' *E.R.E.*) seems to me to be atomistic and to exclude almost everything that we commonly associate with the term and value in one another. But I agree with him that the popular conception of the Trinity is tritheistic, and that those of us who allow ourselves to talk of the Christian conception of God as 'social' rather than 'individual' are exposed to the charge of talking metaphysical nonsense. Perhaps the best that can be said for our scientific theology, is that it provides us with a formula that gives some kind of coherence to the various aspects of our actual religious experience.

We may drop the category of 'substance,' under cover of which the old orthodoxy could speak of 'ways' or 'modes' of existence—one being described as Father, one as Son, and one as Holy Spirit—a 'substance' which had these three 'personal' and characteristic activities: but we may not as Christians conceive of the personality of God as less capacious and rich in its activities and relationships—less subject of manifold experience of the most profound and intimate order—than our Christian forefathers represented by the philosophical terms and the human analogies in which their convictions and reflection were expressed. It is, however, significant that it is on ethical rather than metaphysical grounds that the theory of 'personal pre-existence' is defended to-day by its only considerable champions[3]—quite a modern line of defence that is congruous with the increasingly ethical tone of ontological speculation and the current philosophy of values. It is argued that the great sacrifice which the belief that God is Love implies, which is manifested in the life of the Incarnate, must belong to the very Being of God. It must be pretemporal, prehistoric. The Son Himself is involved in it, must share in it *ab initio*, in person, not only in idea. The relationship Father and Son, as representing the actuality of love and its inherent activity of sacrifice, must be rooted in the Being of God. So the Son must be as eternally existent as the Father. The religious value of the idea is obvious. I do not think we can escape the logic of the argument or entrench ourselves behind the thought

[3] *E.g.* H. R. Mackintosh in *The Person of Christ*, pp. 445 ff (as indeed by A. B. Bruce, in *The Humiliation of Christ*, before him).

of an ideal existence outside Time in contrast with a real one in Time.

But it must be observed that for scientific theology the pre-existence of the Son is not really 'personal' in the sense in which popular religion understands the term. By faith in God to-day we mean the conviction that Power and Love and Purpose are the characteristics of ultimate reality. And the Pauline conception of pre-existence, to which I have referred, may be found to have its true religious and scientific value for us as the expression of the conviction that the personality and life of Jesus was the crowning manifestation of this divine power and love and purpose: that in Him regarded as Redeemer was revealed in the fulness of time and actualized —or we might say evolved as the natural resultant in due sequence of the whole course of human experience and history to that moment—the ideal which was in God's mind in the creation of man. Where it is the eternal and inherent creativeness of God that is in action, the highest manifestation of it in human experience and history 'always' 'was.'

Or I would put it in another way and say: For love to be there must be subject and object, but there need not be reciprocation. If reality is really God and man: if a world of finite intelligences is co-eternal with God, whether the world we know or another or many others, and if it is the externalization of Himself as it has been conceived as being, then the doctrine of the Incarnation means that the expression of Himself (thus externally in time in the world and man) reached its plenitude in the man Jesus. He is the perfect expression in time and space of the personality of God: no sudden intrusion on the historic process, but its perfect product, the scion of many forefathers to be the firstborn of many brethren.

So, if I may end this long paper with an attempt to say as simply as possible what, on this conception of the conditions of the Incarnation, the Incarnation means, and put it personally, I should say that what my faith in the Godhead of Jesus means to me is that I believe that, in getting to know Him, I get to know God: that what He does for me, the at-one-ment of which He makes me conscious, is a divine work. Never does He cease to be man for me: the whole appeal He makes to me is

through that which I have in common with Him; only when I regard Him as man can I learn anything from Him. Yet what I learn from Him is God as well as man. He becomes for me merged, as it were, in God, or identical with God. It is not that love for Him 'leads me on' to love for the Father He loved, but that in loving Him I believe I love the Father. If I am on His side, I am on God's side. If I truly serve Him, I am serving God. I am constantly left to my own devices as to ways and means of living in the world as it is on the lines He manifested and reveals. But so far as I can make His ideals and His values of life my own, I am sure I am doing the will of God. God stands to me for the highest values in life, and because I believe those values were actualized in the person and life of Jesus, I must use the title 'God' of Him.

When I take St. Thomas' words, penetrating and personal as they are, and declare Jesus 'my Lord and my God,' I am conscious that my categories of thought are not the same as those of a Tertullian or the Fathers of Nicaea or of Chalcedon, or of any ecclesiastical definitions down to the present day. I do not know exactly how to describe the *differentia*. It is not quite satisfactory to say that those definitions are conceived on lines of thought that are 'physical' and 'ontological' when they deal with the relation between Jesus and God; for those were the terms in which they described ultimate reality, and when I call Jesus God I mean to express the same relation between Him and reality. I think I mean quite as much as the Fourth Evangelist meant when he created the St. Thomas narrative to become the classic expression of faith in the incredible, *credo quia impossibile*, and as he meant by the words he assigns to Jesus Himself: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

When our conception of reality has become essentially ethical, spiritual, personal, our faith, our religion, must be expressed in terms of our own relation as persons to it: and when I say that the man Jesus is 'God,' I mean that He is for me the index of my conception of God. I say 'He,' because I mean not only His teaching, His own ideas about God, but also His life, His personality as a whole, as I learn it, primarily from the impression He made, so far as it can be inferred from

the Gospels and the early religious experience of which He was the centre.

It is not from anything that I know beforehand about God that I infer that Jesus is God incarnate. I know almost nothing about God's character apart from Jesus. But I attribute to God the character of Jesus. I say my conception of God is formed by my conception of Jesus. The God I recognize is a supreme 'person' like Jesus in all that makes 'personality.' In thinking of God personally as Jesus did and as we do, I believe that I am, at all events, thinking along the lines of truth, in the right direction. So Jesus is the creator of my God. The relations into which I can enter with Jesus are for me relations with God. I know, of course, that I may be the victim of illusion; it is my faith that, through this estimate of Him, of His significance, I am in touch with reality.

JESUS: HUMAN AND DIVINE

By the Rev. R. G. Parsons, M.A., Rector of Birch-in-Rusholme, Manchester. Formerly Fellow of University College, Oxford.

A DOMINANT characteristic of religion of the present day, whether of plain men or professors, is its impatience of mere tradition. No belief, however Scriptural we may be able to prove it, no dogma, however venerable the ecclesiastical authority by which it has been promulged, can claim the serious attention of thoughtful men and women to-day merely because it is Scriptural, primitive or Catholic. There must be also, at least a *prima facie* probability that its acceptance will make some actual and appreciable difference for the better in our comprehension of the meaning of the universe, and our capacity to live our lives and develope our personalities in conformity with the self-evident values of beauty, truth and goodness.

It may indeed be true, as I believe it is, that the New Testament is the expression of the faith of a company of people who believed in Jesus as both human and divine; it may be equally

true that the great theological controversies in which the Christian Church worked out its distinctive ideas about God and man turn round the same conviction; but for the needs of the present day it is not enough to prove this: those who would commend Christianity to the modern world are insistently called upon to answer the question: 'What practical difference will it make to us and to the world we live in whether we share this conviction or not?' A great deal of Christology, both traditional and modernist, strikes those who are not professional theologians, as a mere intellectual tour de force, more ingenious than interesting; and one sometimes feels that it would strike Jesus of Nazareth in much the same way. He was so much more concerned with His message than with Himself; and many people to-day are much more interested in His teaching about the Fatherhood and kingdom of God than they are in the Church's efforts to prove Him human and divine. This attitude of theirs is a rebuke and a warning to the Church, which echoes the very words of the Master Himself: 'Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Jesus lived and died not in order to prove Himself both human and divine, but in order to bear witness to the truth and to bring in the Kingdom: not to glorify Himself, but to glorify the Father. He was the very negation of self-centredness. He was completely engrossed in His ideal and the task it laid upon Him. I venture to suggest that this is the fundamental reason why it remains to this day so very difficult to be quite sure what He actually did think about Himself, and what were the actual titles or phrases He may have used to describe His own individual Person and office. Was it merely in order to parry the thrust of the Pharisees that He met their question, 'By what authority doest thou these things?' with another question? Was it merely to pull up the Young Ruler in his careless and conventional use of the word 'good' that He asked him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good save one, even God.' The more inconclusive the evidence of the Gospels appears to be in the light of careful criticism, as to what our Lord actually did teach concerning Himself, the more certainly the fact emerges that His primary concern was not to impart, even to His chosen disciples, an exactly defined concept of His

own nature and person, but to enable them to understand the good news and the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, to manifest the love of the Father, and to impart the spirit of self-sacrificing love by His own example and influence. Is not absolute disinterestedness at the very heart of His teaching, is it not the secret of His moral and spiritual power? Do we not put a wrong emphasis on His words if we interpret His, 'But I say unto you,' as though all the stress were on the '*I*,' instead of on what He *says?* Do we not misinterpret the significance of His requirement of faith in Him, if we represent it as concerned more with His desire to be recognized as Master and Lord than with His desire to be at the service of all?

I would suggest two further possible reasons why He refrained from clearly defining His own person: as a great teacher He realized that really valuable knowledge is not that which is imposed by authority, however infallible, but that which the learner, by His own experience and thought, makes His own. This He clearly recognized as a principle of His teaching when He made use of parables; and His own life is the greatest of all parables to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. To some it is a scandal, to others folly, but others again find it the very power and wisdom of God. It is significant that both in the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel the first affirmations concerning His nature and person are made by others to Him and not by Him to others. Also, may He not Himself have felt, what His followers have so often felt after Him, that He was far more to men than could ever be adequately expressed in any form or definition that human mind or human lips could frame? The most He would do was to acquiesce when others made sincere affirmations about Him.

I cannot help feeling that we detract from the majesty of Jesus when we present Him to the world as one who was chiefly or even greatly concerned that people should think the right thing about Him; and yet that is sometimes the impression that ardent Christologists give, however good their intentions. It is quite possible—perhaps probable—that we shall never know for certain how Jesus Himself thought or spoke about Himself, in what sense He used the terms 'Messiah,' 'Son of God,' 'Son of Man.' But this need not disconcert us; the

fact of Christ remains, the personality of Jesus of Nazareth stands sure; the moral and religious convictions about Him generated by contact with that Personality through the centuries continue to develope; and it is the implications of these crucial convictions which constitute Christology a vital activity of the religious mind. Though Jesus was not concerned to define Himself, it was and is inevitable that His followers should sooner or later endeavour to define Him: the self-same spirit of disinterested witness to the truth which made Him what He was, compels mankind inevitably to face the question: 'What think ye of Christ? Who is this Son of Man?'

And of course it follows, when we try to answer for ourselves these questions, that we must investigate with all the exactitude of true reverence the self-consciousness of Jesus so far as it has been revealed to us in such records as we have. This is a task which is especially laid upon the theologians of the present day, and it is a peculiarly difficult one: just because it consists so very largely of reading between the lines, it requires something of the genius of the dramatist and the poet, as well as of the historical critic, if it is to be done at all adequately. But when every allowance has been made for subjectivity, when we have rightly—as it seems to me—declined to commit ourselves to any of the schemes of psychological development through which the self-consciousness of Jesus has been supposed by various critics to have passed from stage to stage, there do remain certain great constitutive elements of His self-consciousness which stand out clear and indubitable, the very essence of His individuality. There is the amazing sense of the nearness and reality of God, that close unbroken intimacy and communion with an almighty, loving Spirit which is the basis of His teaching about the Fatherhood of God: there is that clear vision of the character of God, Who is Perfect Love, as of one who sees Him face to face, and speaks of that which He knows: there is that serene assurance of perfect harmony between His own mind and will and the mind and will of the Father, as of a Son in whom the Father is well pleased: that sense of perfect accord with the Ideal which left with those who knew Him best, through all

their bewilderment and misunderstanding of Him, the clear impression that in Him was no sin, not merely that He avoided doing anything that was contrary to love, no merely negative sinlessness, but a positive fulfilment of all love's righteousness. The New Testament writers do not try to *prove* the moral perfection of Jesus judged by His own standard, they simply *assert* it, a far more eloquent testimony of the impression He made upon them. And there is that transparent honesty of purpose, that utter faith and assurance in the truth to which He bore witness which led Him, when the time came, to face death for blasphemy rather than deny that He truly represented the will and nature of God. In all this He is unique, no one can study the record of religious experience without acknowledging how unique He is; and surely what is so clear to others must have been clearer still to Himself. We find, as a matter of fact, a sense of distinction, of authority and power underlying His words and actions; yet with it all, and as the basis of it all, the perfection of the meek and lowly spirit, conscious of its dependence on God, seeking through prayer the inspiration and power for sustained and by no means effortless obedience to His will, and ever giving itself unreservedly in self-sacrificing love of the brethren.

But I would urge that the mere recognition of these unique qualities in the consciousness of Jesus Himself does not make a Christology: it is only when we come to consider and evaluate the reaction of Jesus upon the world that we have the elements out of which a Christology can be formed. The final Christology will not consist of the irreducible minimum of what we may reasonably believe Jesus to have thought about Himself, but of what the religious consciousness throughout the ages has discovered Him to be. The books of the New Testament are a vivid record of what He came to be for His personal disciples and for the first generation of those who believed through their witness to Him; from its very nature, as the expression of the experience of those who were historically closest to the impact of the Jesus of History on human life, it will remain, so long as the Church lasts, the classical Christology. No Christology which ignores the New Testament can have any more claim to serious attention than can a philo-

sophy which ignores Plato and Aristotle, yet the New Testament remains only the expression of what Jesus had come to mean for the Christians of the first century A.D., and therefore it cannot be the final Christology. All attempts of the Church to impose it authoritatively for acceptance as such on those who live in later ages as the only permissible form in which the faithful can express their convictions about Jesus are attempts to do that which Jesus Himself, if there is any truth in my contention, declined to do. The same is true of the magnificent efforts of the Greek mind to explain the personality of Jesus which came to be embodied in the Catholic Creeds, and of all subsequent efforts to build up the doctrine of the Person of Christ: these declare what He had come to mean for those who believed in Him, in the experience which was possible for Christians at this or that particular time and in such and such particular circumstances. That these convictions about Him did come into existence is valuable evidence for those who come after, and the Church rightly conserves in its treasury the great Christological systems of its past for the guidance of its future. But a living faith can never rest content with what others have believed about its Lord, however great the consideration which it may attach to their convictions; it will seek to understand Him in the context of the problems and perplexities, and the ever-widening experience of its own time. 'Whom say *ye* that I am,' Christ asks still, as He asked His first disciples; but He does not Himself impose upon us what answer we are to give, He waits for us to give it.

And what are we perplexed and harassed Christians of the twentieth century to say?

At the present time there is one thing we can declare with no uncertain voice. As a result of the faithful and laborious efforts of historical criticism we have once more been brought face to face with a Man; once more we know Jesus of Nazareth to have been what the Church has ever with its lips declared Him—very and true man; as the formula of Chalcedon puts it, 'of one substance with us as regards His humanity,' genuinely, utterly, completely, unreservedly human, a Palestinian Jew, a Galilean, a man Who expressed Himself in and through the conditions and limitations of life and thought

peculiar to His own times and to the race of which He was a member, however independent and masterly His use of current categories and forms of speech. It will be hard for mankind ever again to doubt His genuine humanity. And before this Jesus of flesh and blood we stand in reverent awe and honest gratitude: we feel ourselves in the presence of someone real, genuine, one who is ἀληθινός, as we cannot feel when confronted with the wonder-working superman and demi-god which Apollinarianism, masquerading as orthodoxy, has for so long presented as the object of the Church's worship. The mist of centuries has cleared away, and once more we behold the Man, the Teacher, the Friend, the Hero, the Revealer of the More Excellent Way, and we feel that in Jesus we have the pledge and proof that humanity is capable of realizing its ideal.

And to bring present-day men and women face to face with the Jesus of History is perhaps the best and most useful piece of teaching that the teaching Church to-day can do. The prevailing spirit of the present time is more Antiochene than Alexandrine, and that being so, I am convinced that the best method of arousing interest in the Person of Jesus is to show our people to the best of our ability Jesus the man, and His actual personal and historical achievement as a man. Surely if our desire is to reproduce the Apostolic experience, that is the way to set about it. And incidentally I would suggest that in teaching children we shall make Jesus far more real to them than apparently the prevailing modes of teaching about Him succeed in doing, if we endeavour to present Him in a way that will appeal to their developing interests: for younger children as the Best of Friends, for growing boys and girls as the Hero, for questioning and argumentative adolescence as the Teacher of a sublime wisdom, for young men and women faced with the problems and perplexities of grown-up beings as the Master of the Art of Life. But always as 'one of ourselves.' Orthodox religious teachers have been so anxiously occupied in safeguarding the Divinity of Christ that they have almost forgotten His Humanity: I would urge them to make sure of the Humanity, and the Divinity will make sure of Itself. For I do not for a moment desire to suggest that the man Jesus is all we have to teach or all that people require to

learn; but I am convinced that we cannot usefully teach the fuller truth by dictating dogmas about it, nor can they usefully learn it except they learn it for themselves. The Christian Church all down the ages has born witness not only to the manhood, but to the Deity of Christ; but that witness has been with power only when it has been the expression of the personal convictions and the outcome of the personal experience of those who have borne it, not because they held it to be orthodox, but because they knew it to be true. Those who have come by this conviction desire that others should have it too, not merely or mainly for the sake of intellectual agreement, but in order to share the strength and gladness that it brings; but I would urge them not to try to force it, but to let it grow, as Jesus was content to do. *Solvitur ambulando*, by walking in His way of living, by putting to the test of practice the principles that He taught, by striving to help forward the realization of that Kingdom of His dreams, by coming under the influence of His character and partaking of His Spirit: for no man can call Jesus 'Lord' but by the Holy Ghost.

All around us to-day we see the signs of the disastrous failure which brings down both men and nations when they fail to be faithful to the teaching and example of Jesus. The havoc and the peril of a civilization which has not dared to trust utterly to the Law of Love are a far more eloquent witness than any reasoned doctrine of the Church to the essentiality of the Spirit of its Lord. The world simply cannot get along without Him: it begins to fall to pieces when it tries to leave Him out. It is not because the Christian nations have been too Christian that they find themselves where they are, but because they have not been Christian enough. We have far more powerful evidence than St. Paul ever had at his disposal for his conviction that in Christ all things consist, or hold together, though we might well wish that the evidence were of another and less humiliating kind; and the evidence is already generating in the minds and consciences of a number of thoughtful and earnest people—whom disquisitions about the Incarnation and the Deity of Christ leave cold—a burning desire to make the great experiment, and to follow Him in all sorts of practical efforts to re-organize our social, industrial and political

activities on the principles and by the methods which Jesus taught and used in Galilee. God more abundantly, perhaps, than ever before in its history has made foolish the wisdom of the world which ignored Him, and we are being challenged to learn, on a vaster scale than those who went before us, that in the character and teaching of Jesus is revealed a wisdom and a power which is adequate to every situation and can overcome every difficulty. As yet this is a hypothesis that has to be tested by experience; but those who are trying, however unsuccessfully, to follow in His steps in their personal and family life feel increasingly assured in their consciences that He is not failing them as they try to follow Him in their wider activities also. There is a growing conviction of the universal applicability of the mind and character which was manifested in Jesus of Nazareth, and especially an increasing realization —as Dr. Temple has recently put it, in his book on *The Universality of Christ*—that:

> 'There is no conceivable situation in which it is not possible to show absolute perfection of love. . . Does it not tell you a good deal about the universe in which we live, that love is one of the things—perhaps the only thing—that can never be excluded by circumstance?'

Along lines such as these I believe many people, who may at present only profess to be followers of the Man of Nazareth and His way, are coming, by convictions which are the same as those which led St. Paul and St. John, to assert, each in his own way, the cosmic significance and Deity of Christ. Naturally enough they may not express their convictions in the way in which the Apostles or the Nicene Fathers did, but the convictions are fundamentally the same, though created and verified by a very different sort of experience; and gradually a terminology more adequate to express them will emerge.

The kind of God men will no longer believe in is the kind whose existence makes no practical difference for the better in the world. The God who commands the allegiance of their rational faith is One through spiritual communion with Whom disordered human nature can be brought to inward consistency and peace, and receive mental and moral power to bring order out of the chaos which is caused by the unruly wills and affec-

tions of sinful men, a true Father of Spirits, the Creator and Educator of the whole human race, patient and giving Himself to the uttermost to bring into being spirits who can fully share His Spirit and become participators in His Love. Such is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the clearest picture we have seen of His glory is that which is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Let the Church but confidently and faithfully call the men and women of to-day into moral and spiritual fellowship in life and action with the man Jesus to make the great experiment of faith, and it can rest assured that they too will discover in Him the Image of the invisible God, the very self-expression in human form of the eternal Life and Love.

THE FAITH OF A RE-UNITED CHURCH

I.

By Canon T. H. Bindley, D.D., author of *Œcumenical Documents of the Faith*, &c.

What degree of unity in Faith will be necessary in a re-united Church?

WE are not asked on this occasion to express our own personal belief, whether of expanded or contracted extent, but to try to find some essential basis of unity in Faith which all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity may profess without mental reservations or intellectual gymnastics. We want something really *ex animo*.

Christianity makes a world-wide appeal. Its motto is universality. It is not exclusive in character, or intolerant of aught but formalism, and hypocrisy, and sin. It regards the human race as One Family, careless of country and nationality and stock: it recognizes the One Fatherhood of God, and therefore the One Brotherhood of man.

Our aim is to find, not so much some formula which will unite (for it is formulas which only too often divide), as some expression of that devotion to the Great Master which all who

profess and call themselves Christians can without hesitation make their own. We want to include, not to exclude. We want to gather in the great Eastern and Western Churches that prize their baptismal and liturgical use of a historic Creed: the Presbyterian Churches that but rarely recite any formula or belief: the goodly fellowship of all the Free Churches (whether with or without a recognized Ministry), who prefer to disclose their faith in prayer: the Society of Friends, who are Christians although they practice no Sacraments.

It is of little use to suggest a revised form of any existing Creed, as though we could whittle down belief to some irreducible minimum: that is an entirely wrong attitude in which to approach the problem. And it seems to me equally useless to propose the Nicene Creed in either its original or later form. The terms of fourth century metaphysics are almost meaningless to us to-day. We need a confession of faith in which the essentials are implicit, rather than a Creed which attempts to make them explicit. Would not a confession of personal devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ as the Supreme Revealer of the Love of God, and as the Saviour of the world, suffice?

The confession 'Jesus is Lord,' which includes a belief in His present living Energy, was a sufficient summary for St. Paul, and truly involves the whole of the Christian belief; for it is only through Him that we learn of the Father, and only from Him that we receive His Spirit. (Romans x, 9; St. John xiv, 6, 9; xvi, 7).

Ecclesiastical formulas as a rule say too much or too little. Too much, when they are placed upon the lips of a congregation which includes individuals of varying degrees of faith, or at least of varying religious temperaments and aspirations: too little, when they are intended to express the glow and fervour of a passionate enthusiasm. For there are whole tracts of religious life and devotion which are untouched in the Creeds. Christianity is a life, not an intellectual assent to facts. It is devotion to a Person, not a subscription to documentary statements. 'The living feeling and practice and worship of the Church are quite outside the range of any Creed.' The Creed may attempt to concentrate in words the *grounds* for that feeling and practice and worship, but it cannot express

those essential elements, just because they must by their very nature be expressed in *life*.

Moreover, reliance upon the possession of a formulated Creed tends to make people think that they have arrived at a finality in all Truth which simply has to be handed on. This attitude towards the Truth is calculated to blunt that alertness and receptivity which ought to characterize the healthy spiritual faculty. Such persons cease to be on the look-out for fresh aspects of the Truth, and to offer them a welcome when they are indicated. Dr. Westcott taught us nearly forty years ago the transitory value of exact formularies, when he wrote in his preface to *The Revelation of the Father*, 'No formula which expresses clearly the thought of one generation can convey the same meaning to the generation which follows.'

Many Christians prefer to let their Creed find expression in Prayer. Prayer is a very natural method of expressing belief. The very fact that we go to God in prayer implies our belief in Him and in His love and care. Husband and wife, parent and child, do not need verbal expression for their trust in each other, nor do they set aside so many moments in which to affirm it solemnly. Their whole life is an attitude of love and trust, and to express it formally would be almost to degrade it. It is certainly a significant fact that, as has been often pointed out, 'the most typical and sacred form of words in Christianity is not a Creed or a Law, but a Prayer.' The centre and object of Faith is a Person Who exemplifies and inspires the attitude expressed in the Lord's Prayer.

One important lesson of Christianity is humility in the reception and holding of spiritual truth—such truth as we with our finite faculties are able to grasp. Bigotry is the megalomania of religion: it is the claim to possess all Truth, whereas all Truth cannot be possessed by man. It is the property of God alone; and He fulfils himself in many ways and in divers fashions now, even as of old. To hold firmly one's own faith involves no disrespect to the faith of others who view spiritual things from a different angle. Fellowship, goodwill, does not mean indefiniteness or unreality in faith. Just as war is seen to be a ridiculous and barbarous method of settling differences, and just as religious persecution is seen to be a childish form

of endeavour to inculcate truth, so religious tests and credal formulas and articles of belief are becoming recognized as futile barriers between Christian disciple and Christian disciple. Essential sympathy is bound to break down non-essential prejudices. We do not want *all* men to think alike. Just as the physical body is a unity made up of greatly differentiated organs, so the spiritual body of Christ may be a unity made up of very varying members.

In nature we speak of a Universe, perhaps we ought rather to term it a Pluriverse. It is the very Unity of the First Great Cause that brings about the multiformity of the details. No two leaves are alike; no two pebbles are alike; no two human beings are alike. Yet there is a unity of human nature, a unity of stony structure, a unity of foliage. How dull and drab and monotonous would be a nature where every individual of a species or every species of a genus, were identical! How jejune and uninteresting would be the spiritual life if every experience in that sphere were a mere replica of everyone else's experience! We do not *want* all men to think alike. The work of the world could not be accomplished if they did. What place would there be for the artist, the philosopher, the visionary? And what place would there be in the body of Christ for the mystic, the theologian, the ritualist, the ascetic, the Sister of Mercy, if religious fervour could be expressed in only one way? Think of Ignatius Loyola, John Knox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, William Booth—did not God's spirit work with each of these apparently incongruous spiritual temperaments and bring to light different facets of the precious diamond of Truth? The percussion instrument does not emit the same kind of sound as the wind instrument, nor the strings the same as the pipes, yet all produce music, and in their blend of sound unite to create a harmony. And why should there not be something of the same kind in the great orchestra of God's spiritual realm? Our individual ears may be attuned only to receive and note the vibrations of this or that length or velocity, but it would be sheer egoism to deny the spiritual values of other vibrations, whether attenuated or magnified, compared with those to which we ourselves can respond.

There must be a recognition of a diversity of spiritual experience as wide as the diversity of the Holy Spirit's energies. Agreement in obedience to the Spirit of Christ is of more importance than agreement in verbal statements about Christ. The 'faith that worketh by love,' the Christ-like character, Unity in personal devotion to Him: it is in these ways that we shall best express our Unity in Faith, rather than in any form of Creed.

Christ's call has appealed both to the most consummate lordly intellect, and also to the lowliest mind which cannot reason but can only love; and the intuition of affection is no whit less deserving of implicit obedience than the splendid conclusion of a grand syllogism. And since that is so, we need to find out, not a formula, but a temper—not a Creed but a Faith—which is common to all, and which underlies all, and supports all, and inspires all. Devotion to Christ, a self-surrender to Him, a training of our will to coincide with His—we could not hope for, nor have we any right to expect, a more formal unity than this. Uniformity is a very poor thing compared with Unity in Multiformity.

What credal formula would have covered or co-ordinated the 'faith' of such diverse characters as are set before us in the eleventh chapter of the *Epistle to the Hebrews?*—Abel, Abraham, Rahab, Samson, David, Elijah, Isaiah? It was at any rate a 'faith' that impelled to devotion and self-sacrifice. It was a confidence by which they held fast to and substantiated the unseen. And is not the same true in the Gospel story? What was the 'faith' of the sinful woman, of Blind Bartimaeus, of the bearers of the paralytic?

Pistis is faith or trust in a Person, not assent to a fact: a dynamic emotion, not an intellectual achievement: a transference of confidence from self to someone else: a personal devotion to One Whom we can trust and adore.

If this be so, we need to recognize only one communion—the Communion of the Holy Spirit; and to insist on only one bond of union—the twin sacraments of Fellowship and Service.

'This is His commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ,—and love one another.' (I St. John iii, 18).

THE FAITH OF A RE-UNITED CHURCH

II.

By Professor W. R. Sorley, Litt.D., LL.D., F.B.A., author of *Moral Values and the Idea of God.*

What degree of unity in Faith will be necessary in a re-united Church?

THE question has been put in the form, 'What degree of unity in faith will be necessary in a re-united Church?' thus admitting that the Church may possibly be—as it is—disunited, and that in this condition no one of the separate organizations, calling themselves Churches, into which it is divided—neither Anglican, nor Congregational, nor Presbyterian, nor Greek, nor even Roman—can rightly claim to include the whole body of Christians. But these and other organizations between them may include the great mass of the faithful; and a re-united Church should be able to include all who can possibly belong to the visible Church. They will be united by their common Christian Faith. What, then, is this faith? or rather, since it may be shown in varieties of thought and practice, what is essential to it? Has it a common character, and, if so, what is this common character?

The faith has been expressed in creeds, and these again have been formulated as sets of propositions concerning God and man which appeal directly to the intellect. Now, if this is what is meant by a creed, then the creed should not be identified with the faith. The Christian faith is not, to begin with, an affair of the understanding. It is rather a principle of life which expresses itself in many ways—in worship, in conduct, and in understanding.

If it be a spiritual or living principle, it will never fail altogether to manifest itself; but it has to manifest itself in an alien material and among forces of a different kind from itself: and thus its manifestations may be expected to vary in purity and in completeness. It is obvious that these variations do, as a matter of fact, exist. Among professing and genuine

Christians some lead a better life than others, are more spiritual or more constant in their worship, and have a clearer understanding of the things that pertain to the faith. In all these respects the Church aims, or should aim, at perfecting its members; but it does not exclude men from its membership because they are not already perfect in any of them. Nevertheless, the faith is expressed in morals, worship, and intellectual belief; and the perversion of any of them may be evidence of an absence of faith. This has always been assumed. The Church has censured offences against Christian morals; it has prescribed forms of worship; and it has formulated creeds. Any great and persistent divergence from what is thus laid down has entailed the exclusion of the offender from membership of the Church.

In practice the test of intellectual conformity has been found easiest to apply. Ritual observance may be measured by an observer, but spiritual worship eludes him. Moral performance may be estimated, but it is necessary to make allowance for human frailty, and the question is how much? But the acceptance or rejection of a creed is easy to determine. The Church has often been tender to the weakness of the flesh; and it has as often been suspicious of the strength of the intellect. And so it has tended to be very jealous for its creeds and to identify them with the faith. We must remember, however, that this identification is not justified. The intellectual aspect is only one aspect of faith, and the creeds isolate and develop this one aspect. The living faith is primarily trust in a person; it does involve knowledge of the person trusted, but that knowledge is mainly of the more immediate nature called 'acquaintance,' due to close companionship or direct experience, and knowledge about the person trusted—his qualities and work—has to be arrived at by some process of analysis. To take the simplest example: 'I believe in God' is an expression or confession of faith; 'I believe that there is a God' is assent to a theological doctrine. The latter statement is no doubt implied by the former, but it is the result of a different attitude of mind, more reflective and intellectual. The simple believer may never feel the need of formulating the assertion, 'there is a God': he simply trusts in God. It is true that

even the simplest could be made to see that, in this case, the faith involves the doctrine. But that does not hold in all cases, or when we go beyond very elementary statements. It may be true that faith in Jesus as the Christ implies assent to the proposition, 'The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding'; but it is not obviously true, and many Christians, after giving much thought to the question, have been unable to assent to its truth. The authoritative statements of doctrine made by the Reformed as well as by the Roman Church contain numerous propositions which never enter into the consciousness of most Christians, so that they can scarcely be maintained to be of the essence of the Christian faith. They are really parts of a system of theology; that is to say, they belong to the attempt to understand the world from the point of view of the Christian faith. But they have been subject to other influences as well. Neither individual theologians nor the Councils and Assemblies that have defined doctrine have been free from the intellectual influences of their day. First Platonism and then Aristotelianism gave its colour to Church doctrine; and, had a new formulary been produced in England twenty or thirty years ago, it is safe to say that it would have been an amalgam of the ideas of Hegel and Darwin. Fortunately that danger has been averted, and the Christian is not required to believe in Hegel or in Darwin. But should Plato or Aristotle have any greater authority over his belief?

To all this there is just one answer, but an answer which many are still prepared to make. It is this: that there is an authoritative rule which assures us of the truth of the doctrines which are of the faith. But if we ask what this rule is, two different answers are given. One answer is that it is the Church, and that the Church may speak either through a Council or through the Pope when he determines a matter of faith or morals *ex cathedra*, that is, with apostolic authority and as pastor of all Christians. The other answer is that the doctrines contained in the Bible are infallibly true. Now if anyone holds one of these views very firmly, the body of doctrines which he will regard as essential to the faith is likely to be very large, and it will be difficult to get a 're-united Church' to agree upon

them. It is not possible to examine either answer here; but a remark may be made upon each. The former answer lacks positive proof and has to explain the inconsistencies between different conciliar or papal decisions: while it is difficult to see how it can be adopted without yielding the full Roman claims, seeing that, if any conciliar decision is authoritative and infallible, the Vatican Council has as good a claim to infallibility as any other. The positive proof for the second answer is also weak; it also has to explain the divergent systems of doctrine deduced from the Scriptures, especially by the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; while modern knowledge of the Bible has—to say the least—thrown grave doubts on the old method of treating it as a theological text-book.

If these reflections are just there is not, either in Church or in Bible, any infallible authority for doctrinal truth: and we should face the fact. Creed-making is a bit of theology; and in theology, as in science, there is risk of error. The risk must be taken; but, in taking it, the Church should be careful lest it exclude any of the faithful from its communion. We may ask, accordingly, what the Church's attitude should be to doctrinal developments such as those contained in the familiar creeds or in more elaborate articles or confessions of faith. The difficulty of answering the question is due to the fact that two classes of considerations have to be borne in mind, and that the two point in opposite directions: one leading to exhaustive statements of doctrine, the other pointing to the necessity of reducing creeds to a minimum.

On the one hand is the importance of knowledge. Faith would be meaningless if altogether without knowledge, and it is purified and strengthened by the increase of knowledge. It is needless to labour the point, for everyone admits it and the Church has always recognized it—though it has sometimes assumed an unwarranted control of knowledge. But not only is religious knowledge of value in itself, simply as religious knowledge, it is also a way in which the religious consciousness as a whole finds expression and which elevates and protects the other factors of the religious life. This is the reason why the creeds have the place they have in Church services; they are regarded as 'devotional acts.' The Athanasian Creed is open

to criticism; its use has been discontinued in many congregations; where it is used, it has not always much religious value; but it has that value sometimes. 'For myself,' wrote Cardinal Newman, 'I have ever felt it as the most simple and sublime, the most devotional formulary to which Christianity has given birth, more so even than the *Veni Creator* and the *Te Deum*.'

This is strong evidence in its favour; but it at once suggests a reflection of another kind. For the creed is expressed in technical terms which are simply not understood by ninety-nine per cent. of those who recite it; and words whose meaning is unknown have no religious value. Newman himself sets store, on the part of the unlearned, on the intention to accept the decisions of the Church; and such intention may of course be sufficient to adopt the Decrees of Trent or the Westminster Confession. But I venture to think that it has no religious value, besides being treason to the intellect. Surely the members of the Church are not to be supposed to give assent to statements whose meaning they cannot be expected to understand. And if they are not, then assent to the creeds as a whole should not be required of them. Further, the reason why some parts of the creeds are not understood is that they are expressed in terms of dead and forgotten controversies. If living belief in such doctrines were required, they should be re-written in the language not of the fourth century or of the sixteenth, but in that of the twentieth. And at present this cannot be done. Philosophical opinion is too fluctuating, and the results of historical and Biblical study as yet insufficiently determinate for a new statement of doctrine as full as the ancient formularies. Such a statement would divide instead of uniting Christians. The only formulary that can reasonably be required of all members of a united Church at the present time will be one which does not pronounce on questions which are in doubt or dispute amongst those who hold the Christian faith. It is not for me to propose a form of words; but attention may be directed to the utterance of a recent theologian (Dr. Denny) who has suggested that 'the symbol of the Church's unity might be expressed thus:

> I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour.'

IS A CREED NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE?

By Cyril Norwood, Litt.D., Master of Marlborough College.

Is the statement of this one Faith in the form of a Creed necessary or desirable?

WE can obviously give four answers to the question: Is a creed necessary or desirable? *viz.* that the statement of faith in the form of a creed is both necessary and desirable, or that it is neither desirable nor necessary, or that it is necessary, though not in itself desirable, or that it is desirable, though not in itself necessary. In the February *Modern Churchman* there were eighteen answers, and all four types were represented.

Recently, in a striking article on 'Truth and the Creeds,'[1] which most of you will have read, Canon Glazebrook drew clearly a distinction which I regard as fundamental, if we are to have any clearness, but which for all our familiarity with it is frequently obscured. It is this: that Christian faith contains two elements, an intellectual assent, and a moral and spiritual affirmation; it covers the acceptance of certain events as historical facts, and the acceptance of certain views about those facts; and it covers also, on the other hand, an inner disposition and a living experience, a whole attitude which gives life its meaning and its value. The one part is the province of belief, the other of faith. And I hold that the one should be limited to the bare essentials, and alone forms the proper subject-matter of a creed; it is finite, the terminus *a quo*: but the other, the terminus *ad quem*, is infinite, changes with the changing experience of the generations, opens out a new horizon with every new age, and is never the proper subject of a creed. For the one purpose a creed seems to me to be necessary and desirable, but for the other certainly not desirable and certainly not necessary.

[1] Published in *Modern Churchman* for June, 1921.

Some beautiful and inspiring creeds have been suggested in the *Modern Churchman* and elsewhere, beautiful and inspiring to me, an Englishman of the twentieth century. One such, the one of which I am particularly thinking, was published four years ago. It was based entirely on the Johannine writings, and came straight in language and thought from the New Testament. It had therefore this very paradoxical character, that, while it was very much older than the creeds which we possess, it was also very much more modern. It spoke of God as Spirit, as Light, as Love, of Jesus as the Son of God, of our certainty through Him of everlasting life and forgiveness of sins, of our place as God's children, of our portion of His Spirit, and of the eternal values which survive the passing away of the world. It claimed to be not an affirmation of bare facts, but an expression of Christian faith, duty, and experience. And just for that reason, much as I admire its beauty, and much as I feel its inspiration, I believe it attempts too much, that in effect it is trying to put the infinite into words. Words must limit, and we know too well that with the process of time they become bands which cripple growth. They may express our highest experience now:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever—

Let us not by any creed set bounds to God's horizon.

Very well, then, you may say, you would not have any creed at all. I cannot say that; I am afraid that the truth is that a creed is necessary, and I think that it is also desirable. When you have called yourself a Christian, you have stated a creed implicitly. You can have no army without an oath of allegiance; you cannot organize without a common bond. It is the common point from which you start, and though you might try to dispense with it, you would have to invent it again. You could pitchfork it out of the window, like Nature, but it would always come back. When, in the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel, Nathanael answered and said unto Jesus: 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel,' he stated a creed. When Jesus said to the disciples:

'But whom say ye that I am?' and Simon Peter answered and said: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' he too stated the same creed.

It was the creed which united the first Christians, and without that centre of union they could not have held together. When, at the end of St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus charges His followers, He gives them both their belief and their faith, the finite and the infinite: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' That is the creed more developed than it was on the lips of Peter and Nathanael, but He adds: 'Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'—and that opens up all growth and development.

If you look at the first experience of the young Church, you can see that a simple form of creed was found to be absolutely necessary. The eunuch asked Philip: 'What doth hinder me to be baptized?' And Philip said: 'If thou believest, thou mayest.' And he answered and said: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'[2] Is there any evidence that more than this very simple affirmation was required in those first days? I cannot find that more was required. In the Epistle to the Romans I read: 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved': or again, in the first Johannine Epistle: 'Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.' Each one of these statements is a creed, and by the founders and first preachers of our faith each was thought enough.

We know how the creeds grew and developed; it was by a process of definition against error. They are still living, but they are like old trees which carry dead branches. Those branches were full of vigour and purpose once, but the sap that is the life of the tree now mounts past them, and carries its vigour elsewhere. It is both necessary and desirable that we should know and affirm the unity which binds us together,

[2] It is true that this creed is omitted from the Revised Version as a later addition to the text of the Acts (viii, 37), yet we have every reason for believing it to reflect primitive Church practice and belief.

whatever our differences of experience and our diversity of outlook. But it is unwise to attempt more than a statement of the absolute essentials. On that foundation we can build each our own building, and whatever it is, gold or silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, it will be made manifest in due time for the day will declare it. I put it to you that the essential things are no more than these:

> I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in His Holy Spirit.

You may say that this is not enough. I can only answer that it was enough for St. Paul, and it was enough for St. John; and, above all, it was enough for our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

THE NATURE OF AN IDEAL CREED

By the Rev. J. C. Hardwick, M.A., Chaplain of Ripon Hall, Oxford; author of *Religion and Science from Galileo to Bergson.*

What Creed should be used? or what other formulary would be desirable?

WHAT is the nature of the creed or creeds that we shall agree to prefer as an ideal basis for a re-united Church?

It would appear that historically a creed originates as a summary or epitome of some system of theology. This is most obvious in the case of the most homogeneous of the creeds—the so-called Athanasian—which has been described as a bad and bald epitome of St. Augustine's work on the Trinity. Yet it is also true to say of the other two Prayer Book creeds that they are theological epitomes. The Nicene Creed, although in its original form it dates from the fourth century, and in its Prayer Book form is even later, may be said to summarize, no doubt with accretions of a more or less alien character, the Neo-platonist theology first formulated by the third century Alexandrians. As for the Apostles' Creed, it suffered a certain

amount of emendation before it received the form now familiar to us, but it may be said to epitomize the more or less unsophisticated theology of the earliest generations of Christians, especially those of Rome.

But although some of the earliest systems of Christian theology were thus—sometimes not too accurately—epitomized, the practice failed to become permanent. Creed-making did indeed continue to be fashionable until the development of theology came to an abrupt stop with the collapse of civilization in the fifth and sixth centuries. And then, the output of theological systems having ceased, there was no longer any demand for their official epitomization by creeds.

And when Christian thought came to life again in the eleventh century, and developed such astonishing vitality in the thirteenth, generations of uncritical veneration of ill-understood symbols had already done their work. The creeds were now in a position of unassailable security, and respected as supernaturally revealed formulæ, the *ipsissima verba* of the Holy Spirit. The idea of a new creed would have seemed impious.

And even at the time of the Reformation, when theology came to life yet again, though there was a plentiful crop of Confessions, Decrees, and Articles, not only Protestant but Catholic, the creeds, by an universal agreement, remained where they were. Reformers were particularly anxious to escape suspicion of doctrinal heresy, and maintained, for the most part, that the development of Christian theology had ceased with Augustine, a doctor whose prestige was pre-eminent amongst them. So much so that the Augustinian, Calvin, did not hesitate to send Servetus to the stake, with a pious implacability not unworthy of Torquemada himself. The Reformers displayed peculiar intolerance towards those who went a little further than themselves: they had no more patience with Socinians or Anabaptists than the mediaeval Church with the Albigenses.

The first reflection suggested to our minds by those historical antecedents of the creeds seems to be that it is high time to abandon the traditional policy of uncritical veneration, and

to go back to the more primitive habit of constructing a new creed whenever the situation appears to demand it.

But it would have to be quite clearly understood that when the finality of the traditional formulae, for which permanency and absoluteness has so long been claimed, has been abandoned, the very idea of a permanent and absolute formula, whether ancient or modern, evaporates. An arrested development becomes an anomaly when the principle of development has once been accepted. If it be irrational to pause, with the Reformers, at Augustine, it is equally irrational to hope that the pause can be made at some point in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, not only does the notion of a permanent formula disappear, but there emerges another logical consequence of the new policy—the necessity for simultaneously recognizing not one, but several formulae. For, so long as Christian experience continues to be interpreted in terms of more than one philosophy, more than one type of Christian theology will be produced, each of which will deserve to be epitomized by a different formula.

Thus the acceptance of the principle of a modern creed seems to involve two corollaries: (1) That a final creed is chimerical. (2) That several creeds may require, and deserve, to be simultaneously recognized.

But if the idea of a provisional creed, or of alternative creeds, seems unattractive, and if, although dissatisfied with the traditional creeds, we hanker after some permanent and unique symbol, there is an expedient open to us of which high hopes have sometimes been entertained. Many minds, depressed by the lack of finality conspicuous in all metaphysical speculation, and repelled by the religious aridity of so much of it, are attracted by the idea that in the ethical sphere things may be different. Yet we have to realize that not only does there exist in the world a diversity of ethical belief (this need not trouble us), but also that there are divergencies of opinion about the content of the Christian ethic itself. We have not yet forgotten the dissensions which arose recently over the Christian attitude towards war. Property, Punishment, Marriage—these words, and others like them, contain fertile seeds

of controversy. It might be possible, by confining the scope of the creed strictly to ideals, and leaving the application of them to individual conscience or taste, to construct a formula which should win a wide measure of assent. Such a formula might serve, it is urged, as a sort of manifesto of Christian principles, and thus supply an inspiration and an ideal to a world plunged in moral scepticism.

There is, indeed, much to be said for the formulation of such a symbol: but it should not be forgotten that the policy lies open to a rather serious objection, *i.e.* that it seems to involve the repudiation of metaphysics. And no religion, nor any ethical system, for the matter of that, can afford to do this.

Another suggested policy is the formulation of a creed in Biblical phraseology, and containing only strictly Biblical ideas. Such a creed, in Johannine language, has already been compiled by a member of this Union and published in the *Modern Churchman*. The formula would express religious rather than theological convictions—if the distinction is legitimate. It would utter in natural and spontaneous language the religious convictions and express the spiritual experiences of the writers of the New Testament, which constitute a deposit laid down by the full flood of religious inspiration—a flood which afterwards diminished somewhat in its proportions, and was running quite at its lowest during periods of intense theological controversy. Such a type of creed would have the advantage of being simple and comprehensible, while being expressed in language rich in religious associations. It would also provide for us something upon which much emphasis has rightly been laid—a link with the past, and (what is more) with that period of our past which is most creditable to us.

A few remarks seem to be called for with regard to the traditional creeds themselves, and the desirability, or otherwise, of their retention. The chief advantages of these formulae are that they contain philosophy that is antiquated, and history that is inaccurate. From the standpoint of the anthropological, historical, and theological specialist, these features may be more or less irrelevant. For in spite of them, these creeds do serve, for those who fully understand the thought in which they are expressed, and the attitude of mind of those who composed

them, to embody the genius and meaning of Christianity. Yet, from the standpoint of the ordinary man, whom the creeds were designed to instruct and edify, the disadvantages of an antique formula become more conspicuous. When the purpose of a formula is to supply us with the truths whereby men live, there is no advantage in having those truths conveyed by expressions which require so much interpretation before they can be intelligible.

Nor is it very easy, by some judicious emendation, to convert the creeds into satisfactory formulae. To modernize an old creed is an enterprise beset with dangers, and is even more difficult than the construction of an entirely new creed. It is true that the oldest forms of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds lack some matter which we no longer find palatable; but it is doubtful whether even in their more primitive shape these formulae would prove permanently satisfactory.

We may seem to have arrived at no very definite conclusions. Such as they are, they may be summarized as follows:

(1) The construction of a new creed inevitably involves the sacrifice of a permanent or unique Christian symbol, and might also involve the use of alternative formulae.

(2) The advantages of a purely ethical creed might prove to be considerable: but also there is a serious danger in repudiating metaphysics.

(3) There is much to be said for the formulation in New Testament language of a creed containing New Testament ideas only. Such a creed, in Johannine language, is familiar to us.

(4) The traditional creeds, though designed to edify the ordinary man, fail in their purpose, and satisfy only the very learned or the very ignorant.

In the presence of these alternatives, we have a liberty of choice. Perhaps most is to be hoped from the first or the third.

THE USES OF A CREED

By Professor Percy Gardner, D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.

What are the proper uses of a Creed and of a Confession of Faith?

I.

SHOULD the creed adopted be one of the historic creeds of the Christian Church, or should some attempt be made to formulate a fresh creed? The disadvantage of the first procedure is that it necessarily involves a certain amount of mental reservation, since there is no one, and certainly no member of this Conference, who could accept the Nicene or the Apostles' Creed literally and completely in the sense intended by those who formed those creeds. Our whole way of thinking, our mental horizon is so completely different from theirs, that a form of words necessarily conveys to us quite a different meaning from that which it conveyed to them. I doubt if any living scholar could perform the feat of bringing his mind by an effort exactly into the condition of those of the Fathers at Nicaea. Thus no reasonable man could accept the ancient creeds except as statements historically valuable, and marking a stage in the intellectual development of Christianity.

On the other hand, considering the extraordinary divergencies of the various branches of the Church, no new creed could be found which would be accepted by all or nearly all of them unless it were so vague as to be without value. Of the two alternatives, the first seems to me the only one practicable.

II.

Should the words of acceptance be, 'I believe,' or 'We believe,' πιστεύω or πιστεύομεν? The Fathers at Nicaea used the plural form, 'we believe'; they tried to voice the universal belief of the Church, not their own private views. It is, I think, a misfortune that the English Church has adopted the singular form, 'I believe.' Considering the differences between men in temperament, education, and intelligence, it is

impossible to expect that if each exercises his private judgment to the full, there should be agreement as to the deep questions of religion. The orthodox Greek Churchman, for example, and the English Quaker or Wesleyan may, in their hearts and in their religious experience, have something in common; but if they were respectively to try to put that experience into words, they would drift poles asunder.

If this be so, the use of the creeds is not to define individual beliefs, is certainly not to furnish a shibboleth which whoever will not repeat is to be cast out, but to voice the historic continuity of the Church, and its permanent relation to Christ, whether as Teacher and Founder in His historic life, or as the exalted and mystical Head of the Church on earth. I should say that any attempt at a definition of belief in the individual sense is hopeless; but if we adhere to the plural form it is much less so. I would even say that a creed, when accepted by any branch of the Church, must not imply that every member of it accepts in a literal sense every article of the creed: it must express a general loyalty to the Church and to its divine Head, and a recognition of the general unity in fundamental belief.

And if this be so, it seems to me better that the creed should be taken rather in a literary than in a dogmatic form. It has been suggested, by Dean Inge and others, that the *Te Deum*, which is almost a paraphrase of the creed, but which is less dogmatic, and is sung rather than said, would be preferable to either of the great creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene. No doubt there are difficulties in this suggestion: but I am greatly disposed to consider it the best yet made.

III.

But the question expressly before our Session to-day is as to the use of any creed which is accepted. That question literally taken is a practical one: but I think it impossible to give an exact answer to it beforehand. The first step, I take it, would be to obtain from the governing or representative bodies of the Churches assent to some form of creed. If this can be done—which at present seems very doubtful—the question of the practical use of the

creed would not be very difficult. In this matter the different branches of the Church at present differ very widely. Some, like our own, incorporate the creed in the Prayer Book, and repeat it at every important service. Some regard the creed as binding on the clergy, but not on the laity, a view which seems to me quite untenable. Some only use it on occasions. Some have hitherto objected to the very principle of a creed; yet in their case some kind of uniformity in belief must be practically accepted, or there could be no uniformity in service and in preaching. In a re-united Church the most that could be expected in regard to a creed would be that it should be openly stated in some official form by every organized religious society. All beyond that would of necessity be left to the separate branch; for no one, I imagine, supposes that all these branches would be absorbed in one organization.

IV.

One point is very important, that a creed, however expressed and however used, should be regarded as a help to union, and not as a test for discriminating and ejecting those who cannot accept the whole of it, or can only accept it in a revised interpretation. If it becomes a shibboleth, and an instrument for heresy hunting, it will do far more harm than good. It must be an expression of corporate rather than of individual belief.

THE PROPER USES OF A CREED

By the Rev. HAROLD ANSON, M.A., Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln.

What are the proper uses of a Creed and of a Confession of Faith?

IN considering the proper function of creeds, I wish to begin with their more unpopular and least attractive function, their exclusiveness.

A creed ought to repel people; it ought to exclude.

'Dogma,' said George Tyrrell, 'is that hard integument of lies which "is necessary to contain the truth."'

I do not think he meant that a creed need be, or ought to be, a statement of facts which are not true: but that it is a harsh, challenging, menacing, defiance to the world, which will horrify, scandalize and banish away those who are obviously not fitted for the fellowship which the creed seeks to guard. I am much in sympathy with that desire to include all kindly and well-meaning people in the Church, in the hope that, once inside, they will find out a creed by themselves, but I don't think it is really practicable.

I remember that when the Irish bishops had consecrated Senor Cabrera as first bishop of the Spanish Protestant Church, some of the English bishops protested that Senor Cabrera did not know anything about Anglican doctrine. No, said the Irish bishops, that may unfortunately be true, but when once he is consecrated, no doubt he will learn it. Dr. Liddon remarked, 'That, dear friend, reminds me of some people who gave a kettle to a monkey, and said, "He will soon learn to make tea."' I am all on the side of our missionary friend who found the institution of a tennis club the best means of promoting the union of the Churches, but I am old-fashioned enough to believe that a Creed would be useful as supplementing the uses of a tennis club.

It has been pointed out that the skin seems a very unimportant part of our organism, and one which fulfils a very humble part compared to the great organs of the body: it is also hard, and subject to violence, and to the inroads of dirt, but if we hadn't a skin, none of the organs would be of any use at all, for they would fall to pieces at the first onset of exterior force.

History seems to show us that a religious movement needs some challenging, and perhaps cruel and intolerant sounding, cry, to ward off the attacks of its natural enemies.

Our Lord seems to have fully recognized the value of such challenges to indifference and worldliness.

Such utterances as 'Blessed are they that hunger,' 'He that saith "Thou fool" shall be in danger of hell fire,' 'He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, &c.,' 'Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,' 'He that loveth his life shall lose it,' 'Let the dead bury their own dead,' are instances of what I mean.

They were words which provoked derision, and appeared at first sight to be entirely unfair. Men were forced to examine further, or to go away hurt and angry. Those to whom the words appealed were forced to examine further. They also were terrified. 'If this be true, it is not good to marry.' 'Who then can be saved?' 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' These are the reactions of the men, who will ultimately be believers, to the harsh statements of a creed.

They were *intended* to exclude. They fulfilled the same function as Gideon's test. They scared away those who had no affinity with the religion they were intended to guard.

And I do think that we live in an age when we still need this exclusive function in a creed. We cannot afford to overweight the ship of Christ with bank holiday trippers, as though we were going for a sail to Margate or Southend.

We need some cry like that of Garibaldi to his volunteers. 'Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger, come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, death. Let him who loves his country in his heart, and not with his lips only, follow me.'

'*Fame, site, marcie forzate, battaglie e morte.*' Unless a creed holds out some such promises, it will never grip, because it will have no excluding force, and it is the function of a creed to hold together the juices of the fruit by the very rigidity of its exclusions.

This is, I believe, as true as it is unpopular, and as true to-day as it ever was in the past. But it is very important that we should exclude the right, and not the wrong, people, and this is the vice of our present creeds. The present creeds make Canon Glazebrook and Dr. Skrine uncomfortable. I want a creed which will make our profiteers uncomfortable. The tendency in the formulation of creeds is to insist upon belief in doubtfully historical facts or in recondite philosophical formulae, and this kind of insistence is apt to exclude the very conscientious, and to include the lazy, the worldly-minded, and the conventional.

It is very remarkable that our Lord laid so much more stress upon blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (the divine

voice in man) than upon rejection of Himself; that He contemplated the salvation of those who would deny having known Him at all, but who were yet loyal to fundamental human relationships; that (most probably) He not only never baptised and never ordered baptism, but stressed instead the tremendous import of being baptised into the experience into which He was baptised, and of sharing in the cup which He found it so bitter to drink.

By our modern creed, we find that people are excluded because they doubt the Virgin Birth; but who could imagine our Lord saying to any man who wished to follow Him, 'Let me first hear what you believe about my mother.'

Our present creeds are unsatisfactory, not because they exclude—they ought to exclude—but because they exclude the wrong people. I do not really object to damnatory clauses in a creed, but to their damning the wrong people.

'How can you Anglicans sleep at nights,' said Martineau, 'when for all you know your baker may be confounding the Persons, and your butcher may divide the Substance.'

As a matter of fact the baker and butcher, if their fancy led them to sing tenor and bass in the choir, would cheerfully chant the whole Confession of Faith without one qualm of conscience, while we should be excluding all those who feel that the philosophical statement of a creed is in itself so difficult that it never ought to be made a test of fellowship, or of office.

Still you do want to *exclude*. You want a creed which shall be so strong in its assertion of principle and moral duty that it shall arrest and convict those who do not mean to stand definitely on the side of right. A creed which will make the butcher and the baker tremble, the butcher when he sells bad meat, and the baker when he overcharges for his bread. A creed which shall stress belief in love, forgiveness, atonement, sacrifice, honesty, simplicity, courage, rather than belief in historical events.

But a creed is also meant to *include*, to draw together those who have a common object. I should ask myself first, if I had to formulate a creed (which God forbid), 'Who are the people that I should want to *include*, if I had a really hard piece of work to do, involving moral courage and danger of

death; for these are, after all, the people who probably are nearest to God. What do I really mean by *knowing* God? What do I mean by the life of God in terms of *human* life? What do I mean by belief in Jesus, His crucifixion, resurrection, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the everlasting life, as *practical propositions*, affecting my own conduct, and other people's conduct in daily life?

As it is, if you have an important work to do, or if you want to draw together those who are really helpers of the world, you would never dream of asking for the names of all those in a neighbourhood who have a special devotion to the Athanasian Creed, or even to the Nicene or Apostles' Creed, or to the XXXIX Articles. You would feel that their profession of faith, in the sense of a creed or formulary as we know it, was a totally irrelevant matter. So in regard to the baptismal profession of faith, it does nothing to exclude undesirable godparents or to include worthy ones.

No one would feel that the country was safer if every cabinet minister had to recite the creed as a profession of faith before entering office, and no one thinks that children are any safer because they have had godparents who have given assent to the questions propounded to them in the baptismal service.

Yet I should be sorry to see the use of a creed abandoned. I think there is a real danger of the modern Church (to use the phrase of Baron von Hügel), 'adopting the religion that Tommy likes. Our young people don't like creeds, we are told.

This reminds us of the story of the Englishman who was arguing with the American about everlasting punishment. The American ended the argument by exclaiming, 'Well, all I can say is that Americans would never put up with it.'

I think it is good for us all to have to recite solemnly words which we *really* believe, and which we mean to act upon, yet which pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, which challenge our ordinary outlook upon life, which formulate positions which we have to cling to with all the powers which are highest within us, and make us tremble even while we assert them, and all the more for those who don't like it.

The Christian Scientists have a creed, which, however one may disagree with it, does this for them. It expresses exactly the faith which they live by when they are at their best; it ends,

'And we solemnly promise to watch and pray for that Mind to be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just and pure.'

I realise, of course, that whatever the creed is, if you set it to a sufficiently elaborate chant, you will get people to recite it without turning a hair, just as any conservative will sing the 'Magnificat,' but is horrified at the Red Flag, which is extraordinarily like the 'Magnificat,' only it is sung to a rousing tune which makes you think it is meant to be acted upon there and then, which is always so dangerous, while no one ever thinks that the menaces of the 'Magnificat' will ever be acted upon at all.

Still I would have a creed, and one that laid stress upon the things which really divide the man of God from the conventional and the worldly man, and that creed must include belief in God revealed in Jesus. I would not have it recited very often. If it were recited a very few times in a year, at a service in which it took a principal place, and which was specially designed to be a service for renewal of vows, it would be much more valuable than it is now. I would not have it intoned or chanted on any account; and I would have it consist of those statements about which we do honestly believe that unless we hold them and act upon them we shall without doubt perish everlastingly.[1]

I believe that such a creed could be drawn up, and used voluntarily and tentatively for a time, at special services, and in special fellowships, and out of these local attempts one would be increasingly used and attain general acceptance in time. If it were a true expression of the truths by which we live, it would *become* the creed of the new generation, and the older creeds would fall into the background. This would be a repetition of the process whereby our present creeds obtained

[1] Part of such a Creed as I have suggested might be taken from the Exhortation in the Baptismal Service:—

> 'I acknowledge myself bound to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, to be made like unto Him, that as He died, and was buried, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptised, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.'

general acceptance. It is not good to hold to a creed or a confession about which authority can say, and *must* say, in order to keep earnest and intelligent men within the Church, 'You need not believe this, but you must not deny it'—'*You* may regard it as figurative, and *he* may regard it as historical, but you *must* all recite it, in order to keep the Church from splitting.'

I am sure that modernist theologians will forgive me if I say that their highly ingenious explanations of the creed, which they have made in order to retain our position in the Church, explanations which the highest authorities explicitly accept, and which, on the whole I think we are justified, in a time of transition, in making, won't appear to those who come after us very worthy of admiration. I fear they will regard us (unjustly, I think) as bold, bad men, with quite insufficiently developed consciences, and will marvel at our long toleration of subterfuge. I cannot regard it as anything but a most unsatisfactory and temporary expedient, until we poor old crabs have developed a new shell.

'Here in Rome,' said Mazzini, 'we must not live as moral mediocrities.' Here, in God's Church, we must not adopt a mediocre standard of intellectual honesty. We must not go on asking for reverence for formularies which we don't take literally.

The Italian Republicans, after the taking of Rome, carried about the sacred *bambino* in state, and tried to re-christen it, and the populace cried '*Viva il bambino democratico*'; and just in the same way we are trying to make ourselves and other people believe that the creeds mean what we now believe; but you cannot make the old formularies express a meaning they were never intended to convey. 'New wine must be put into new wine skins.'

Sooner or later we must reformulate our faith, with a different emphasis, and make it the most sacred part of our worship, a high and holy profession of our true faith, which we can only utter with fear and trembling, because it does in truth express the deepest realities, and bears witness to the deepest glories and tragedies in our own lives—a true confession of a Living God.

WHAT CREED SHOULD BE USED?

By Douglas White, M.A., M.D.; author of *Forgiveness and Suffering.*

What Creed should be used? or what other formulary would be desirable?

I HARDLY know why a medical man should be honoured with an invitation to address you here, unless in the hope of colouring your discussions from a point of view other than clerical. Perhaps the best thing that a medical man can contribute to such arguments is the outlook of a scientific mind. And in the Church of England that is seriously needed.

I want you to look on the question of creed, not in the light of a policy of 're-union,' but as a matter of urgent domestic reform within the Church of England. For we want truth; we want a passion for truth, each one of us for himself or herself; a passion for seizing truth, that will give us no sleep o' nights, that will make us sweat it out. If you all did this, you would be a power in the land. For lack of it, the people are perishing.

If I criticize the official Church, or its rank and file, I am not finding fault with any of you individually, but only expressing facts as I see them. Religion as expounded from our pulpits to-day is out of touch with modern knowledge and modern thought.

Our religion is our relation to the spiritual world. Too often we take a hatchet, and make arbitrary cleavage between natural and spiritual. But the cleavage is artificial. For the whole world is natural, and the whole world is spiritual. There is no distinction between natural and supernatural; for the whole universe is one, and is inseparable from the great Heart at its centre, which supplies its life-stream.

The aim of theology must be to show that the universe can only be explained in its highest and most complex terms—those of spirit—not in its lowest and simplest—those of elec-

trons and energy. If the Church is to retain—or regain—its influence, it must absorb science, not nibble at it. And in absorbing science, it must itself necessarily be altered by that absorption. It is being altered. A greater change has come over religious opinion in the last fifty years than in the whole period of the Reformation. If we refuse to face it, we shall only be left behind. We are being left behind.

It is not possible to believe that the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries, after innumerable and bitter controversies, carried on through the medium of a very imperfect philosophy and in complete ignorance of physical and biological fact, arrived at absolute conclusions on the greatest and most fundamental problems, which would hold for all time. Now their conclusions are expressed to us in our creeds. None of these creeds, in my view, express the convictions of the modern mind on the fundamental principles of Christianity. The 'Athanasian' Creed (as it stands) in its whole spirit no less than its elaborate detail, is unsuitable to-day not only for the laity, but for the clergy too. The 'Nicene' Creed, in many respects grand, is still founded on the philosophy of Divine Substance, and as such cannot be whole-heartedly accepted to-day, even apart from its too close insistence on historical detail. The 'Apostles'' Creed does not exhibit the characteristic failings of the others: but it pins us down to certain things which I strongly feel must be left open to the judgment of the individual Christian—principally the Virgin Birth and the bodily Resurrection.

But while I doubt whether the ancient creeds answer to modern needs, I still think that some credal symbol is required. Both individually and collectively—even among the Free Churches, where the use of any creed is voluntary—there seems to be an instinct which craves a short exposition of those fundamental beliefs which bind people together into religious associations. For the perception of basic truth must ever lie at the root of right conduct.

But this is a different thing from insistence on a grudging, half-hearted assent, with reservations, to a series of propositions which most people cannot even understand, far less accept. I frankly confess that I once thought I understood and, with

minor reservations, accepted the Nicene and Athanasian statements. To-day I feel that even if I comprehend the meaning of the words, they bring little if any light to my mind.

The inadequacy of the existing creeds to our present requirements may be summed up under three headings.

(*a*) The major part of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds (so-called) indicate the answers given in old time to questions which we no longer ask. It is very possible that the best answers were given to the questions in dispute. The disputants —sometimes, at any rate—understood one another, for they both used the same categories of thought and language; but now their categories are obsolete, so that their answers do not meet our questions. This criticism applies with greater or less cogency to the whole course of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. Moreover, as Mr. Meiklejohn has pointed out in a recent number of the *Modern Churchman*, the controversies of doctrinal definition have always proved a disintegrating force; the need to-day is for integration, not differentiation, for synthesis, not analysis. When speaking of God and of Jesus, we must speak in terms of modern thought which will not exclude modern thinkers. If this could be done by the Church, there are not, I believe, lacking signs of possible convergence from the scientific side. As an example, I would venture to cite the recent work and lectures of the physiologist, Prof. J. S. Haldane. The trend of his thought on the larger problem of life appears to me fundamentally Christian; but I do not for a moment think he would subscribe to the Apostles' Creed.

(*b*) A large part of all the creeds consists of a recital of certain historic events. Concerning these there was no controversy in the early centuries; but there is controversy to-day. A fundamental religious creed should not depend on questionable history. Unless I am deeply mistaken, it is just here that the Church has failed to grip the rising generation. The young men and women to-day are earnestly groping for the light; but the truths from which they start are just those which the Church seems to grudge, if not to withstand. The Church (speaking generally) does not appear to love truth as a whole, but only

those statements of truth to which it is committed. The spirit of All Truth is necessarily a reforming spirit; and to-day reform lags. Only the other day Canon Barnes at Westminster Abbey had the courage—for his is a responsible position—to state clearly what thoughtful Christians believe about evolution and about our four Gospels. Many church-goers regarded this as something new and almost revolutionary. Yet it was only what all clergy ought to have been taught themselves, and to have taught their people, for thirty years past. Either they have never learnt themselves, or they are afraid of teaching what they have learnt. The fact of evolution *must* enter into any modern synthesis of Christianity. The main facts of historical criticism *must* affect the Christian outlook. But, as a whole, the Church fears new truth rather than loves it. It is this attitude, I firmly believe, that has destroyed the Church's influence over men and women. 'Re-union' can be of no real value, so long as many of the main factors of ascertained truth are deliberately obscured or practically denied by the clergy—not of the Church of England alone, but of all Churches. While this is so, any re-union would tend to exclude modern thought, by setting up a Highest Common Factor of exclusiveness and a Least Common Measure of tolerance. Any creed of value must leave elbow-room for modern thought. The system of watertight compartments for theology and science has gone. It will never return. Bad as it was for science, it was worse for theology.

(*c*) The existing creeds recite beliefs about God and Jesus, but leave these beliefs largely unrelated to human life. The reaction of belief on conduct was doubtless, at first, taken for granted. But to-day no creed could be sufficient without an explicit statement, in few and selected words, of the ideals of human conduct, suggesting their practical application to life. Yet I do not think that a statement merely endorsing the beatitudes or the golden rule can take the place of a more inclusive formula of faith.

Now, if we are to have a modern creed, it cannot be obtained by cutting up or making a hash of the traditional creeds. To cut out this or that would be taken to imply the rejection of this or that item. The existing creeds cannot be altered or excluded from use—unless, indeed, we follow the use of other

historic bodies and drop the public recitation of the Athanasian Creed, which venerable but distressing document is obtruded on our chief anniversaries, and which, for many serious Christians, destroys the beauty of our Easter and Christmas services, when 'Suffer the little children' would be the more appropriate anthem.

I would myself favour the formulation of a simple and wide confession of faith, carefully constructed, which would satisfy the general Christian consciousness, and would not exclude modern thought. Facility should be given to use such a creed, where desired, as a substitute for the older formularies. Nor should candidates for the Christian ministry be tied down to anything not required of other Christians. It is most disastrous that the clergy, whose highest duty lies in the teaching of truth, should be bound down to the acceptance of formularies which involve endless reservations for every thoughtful man. The nursing of mental reservations is a curse. It paralyses the inner life of conscious honesty; it paralyses influence over others by implying, and often creating, a different atmosphere of life and thought.

But I must get on with actual suggestions for such a creed as is required. I am not sure whether it should begin 'I believe' or 'We believe.' For the latter much may be said; but the former accords with our own usage, and brings the faith home to the individual.

The Christian must believe in God; but we do not need a list of his supposed attributes—omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence. These are unnecessary, and open to misconstruction. Jesus Himself only insisted on the Fatherhood of God and the love that it implies. He is not only the Father of our spirits, or of humanity, but the All-Father.

The Christian, too, must believe in Jesus. If we use the title Christ, this need not be limited to its strictly Jewish and Messianic significance, but may be taken to mean that He is recognized as the Spiritual King of men. As to His life and work, the prime point is that He did in fact discover to men, in the most singular degree, the character and mind of God. He is the Saviour of men because He was the Revealer of God, alike in what He did, said, and suffered.

The spirit of holiness is the Spirit of God; it was also the Spirit of Jesus, by Whom it was appropriated in unique measure; and on its appropriation by ourselves depends the spiritual life of each of us. By identification of our spirits with God's we become, not imitators, but partakers of the divine nature. It is for this reason that we believe in the spiritual unity of all the faithful, not only of the present time, but of all time. This spiritual unity is intimately bound up with the principles of idealism, and the conception of these ideals as alive in the mind of God. Their summation as beauty, goodness and truth seems not inappropriate.

Beyond this, I think, we need an affirmation of the spiritual principles of conduct. Forgiveness, as declared by Jesus, is the vital antidote to evil, whether as between man and man, or man and God. Forgiveness of sins leads to righteousness of life; that righteousness, no less than forgiveness, is rooted in love; for love alone has no limits set to its power; love alone is immortal, and through it we believe in immortality. The opposite of love is selfishness, and immortal selfishness is a contradiction in terms. By affirming belief in all that is good, we implicitly condemn all that is evil.

Is it not possible to include all this in a simple, short and general statement? I think it is; and I am rash enough to suggest a very tentative wording of such an exposition of faith. Few of its words could be omitted, and doubtless many might be added. There is no specific mention of the crucifixion; but the imprint of the Cross is stamped on it all. Here I present it for your consideration:

I believe in God, the Father of all;
And in Jesus Christ, Revealer of God, and Saviour of men:
And in the Spirit of Holiness, which is the Spirit of God and of Jesus:
By which Spirit man is made divine:
I acknowledge the communion of all faithful people,
In beauty, goodness, and truth:
And I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the glory of righteousness,
The victory of love, and the life eternal.

THE PRESENT SITUATION[1]

By the Rev. E. W. Barnes, Sc.D., F.R.S., Canon of Westminster.

'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in heaven.'—Matt. vii, 21.

He who is honoured by being invited to preach the closing sermon at your conference is, I take it, not expected to speak in general terms of the development of religious thought. His task is rather to assess the value of the conference; and, from his own estimate of the tendencies disclosed in papers and speeches, to describe, however imperfectly, the present situation, that we may see something of the difficulties and opportunities of the future. A group of able and learned men have with great candour laid their views before you. You have had a remarkable opportunity of learning how the involved, complicated currents of modern thought influence religious belief. Is there any unity beneath the intellectual and temperamental divergencies that have been revealed?

In the first place, I would emphasize that no one who has been present at your meetings could fail to have been impressed by the religious earnestness by which they have been signalized. It has been assumed, as a fact too obvious to need statement, that religion is of vital importance. Repeatedly it has been made plain that, not only to those who have assembled here, but also among their friends throughout the community at large, religion matters. There have been no signs of mere intellectual curiosity, none of the aloofness of those who inspect and analyse processes of the human consciousness, to which they believe themselves to be superior. Naturally, the intellectual standard of papers and discussions has been high; but mental ability has been the servant of spiritual reality. Those to whom religion is external and worship formal are of necessity pretentious or arid in speaking of such matters as the Person of Christ or the value of creeds. Your traditions preserve you from pre-

[1] This sermon was preached at the close of the Conference in Girton College Chapel.

tence. The seriousness, the tension, and, at times, the elation of your meetings have shown that you most certainly are not, as is sometimes hinted, the restless critics of a dying faith. 'I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.' The speaker who quoted these words expressed the emotion of your conference.

In the second place, I would draw attention to the way in which, quite unconsciously, all those present have assumed both the existence of God and His presence among men. Forty years ago the triumphs of modern science seemed to have made materialism a possible creed and agnosticism a wise one. The evolutionary view of the origin of the universe and of man has become one of the postulates of your thought. Yet none of us are troubled by the unbelief, to which a generation ago that view seemed naturally to lead. Herein, of course, we are representative of the better educated of our countrymen. The old difficulties persist; the problem of evil remains unsolved; the waste of life perplexes us still; but faith has revived. We are, one and all, convinced that we are not chance products of blind forces, but creatures of a divine process, sons of God, Who has made us for Himself. 'God's in His heaven,' and the Holy Spirit is among men. A new certainty has emerged, after a somewhat prolonged period of uncertainty. A parallel change occurred in English religious thought in the first half of the eighteenth century. For a generation the Deistic controversy was furious. Suddenly it ended. Men felt that God was not aloof, remote. Further argument had become useless. Deism died, and the land was ready for the Evangelical revival. So now, if one may judge by the experience of many sections of the community represented here, a strong, firm foundation in secret has been laid on which religion, like some splendid cathedral, will be built anew.

How far will that religion be Christian? That is essentially the problem which you have been discussing. To what extent will Jesus of Nazareth continue to be its centre, His teaching the rule of faith, His example the ideal pattern, His valuation of life the standard? How far will He Himself be deemed, in the future as in the Christianity of the past, the revelation of God to man? Will men continue to find God in and through Jesus?

It is difficult for me to summarize the results of your conference. I am an Evangelical; I cannot call myself a Modernist. As you know, I answer all the questions just asked in the old way. Probably all who have been present would wish to assert that they also are Evangelicals, firmly convinced that the Gospel of Jesus is the religious message of God to man. Yet one or two, in discussing subjects where language cannot adequately express feeling, have seemed to doubt whether the Jesus of history was the unique Person in Whom St. Paul and St. John saw the Only-begotten Son. I weigh, without prejudice I trust, all that they have said. In the end I feel no hesitation in affirming that Jesus rose from the dead to become the living Christ, One with the Holy Spirit. We all seek for truth. But, whereas to some truth seems a tide destined to rise and sweep destructively across lands where Jesus reigned as the Son of God, to me it is the power which will set free new streams to irrigate His Kingdom. Yet even those who seem, to the majority among us, to undervalue the supreme greatness of the Founder of our faith, are eager to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God, as He proclaimed it. In His words we have prayed together, 'Thy Kingdom come.' And surely from such unity of practical aim, from a common conviction that we must work together in the service of Jesus, we shall in the end reach agreement. I have welcomed the intervention of those who, disclaiming any knowledge of scholarship or theology, have in simple language revealed the power of Christ in their lives. For theory and practice, speculation and life, cannot be separated. We cannot begin to explain Jesus until we know how men and women are transformed by the love of Christ constraining them. It is good that such a fundamental question as the Divinity of Christ should be discussed publicly by men and women who are eager to worship God in spirit and in truth. Only by amicable discussion, by patient and prolonged argument, and, I would add, by corporate prayer, can agreement be reached. But let us not disguise the fact that there is an element of danger in such public debates as those of the past week. To the newspapers negations are good copy. Constructive theology, especially when its conclusions agree closely with the affirmations of tradi-

tional piety, is seldom welcome to the modern editor. I have during the past week studied with care reports of the conference which have appeared in certain important newspapers. Probably there has been no intentional misrepresentation; but an unreflective reader might, from some journals, easily get a wrong impression of the balance of opinion among you. It can be confidently affirmed that restatement of the Christian faith, and not rejection of Christian fundamentals, has been the object—the successful object—of your conference.

There has been no attempt to force agreement between traditional theology and modern thought; but, by getting behind phrases and formulae to the ideas which they were originally intended to convey, the natural harmony between the best Christian thought of the past and ideas that sometimes are wrongly deemed unorthodox now has been repeatedly disclosed. Inevitably there are differences of outlook between ourselves and our spiritual ancestors. The background of our thought is not that of the first century of the Christian era, nor is it mediaeval. But it has been clear that the spiritual values, which from the first Christians tried to preserve, most of us feel it necessary and natural to keep. Experts have shown us that the faith of the New Testament is to be likened, not to a bar of iron, but to a many-hued flower. They have emphasized that, between this faith and the religious intuitions of the modern man who is drawn to Christ, the opposition is often more apparent than real. Between those intuitions and ignorance which fancies itself orthodox, they have shown that there is a definite gulf.

In attempting to describe the nature and meaning of the Incarnation in the ordinary language of current use, we have not reached finality. We have seen the urgent need of a fuller knowledge of the structure of the human mind if we would explain how Jesus was related to God and how we receive grace from God through Christ. Experimental psychology could render most important service to Christian theology if it could show us how we make contact, to use William James' phrase, with the Spirit of God. Until we have such knowledge every aspect of the interaction of the human and the Divine will be a mystery. I imagine that our ignorance in this region has caused

us to avoid questions concerning reconciliation, redemption, salvation. I regret the omission, because such matters are central in Christian experience. But we have, I think, learnt how modern views of God and modern conceptions of personality may ultimately lead us more fully to understand the divine nature of Jesus and His spiritual supremacy.

In so far as it has promised such understanding, I think that your conference is a step towards that restatement of belief which must precede effective Christian re-union. As is obvious to every one, all the Churches realize, though some do not acknowledge, the necessity of presenting the Christian Faith in terms of current thought. With those Churches which shall best succeed in this endeavour, which shall combine intellectual strength with religious earnestness, the future lies. Sooner or later they will unite with one another under the compelling influence of the Spirit of God. You are working towards that end. But will you forgive me if, in this connection, I speak frankly to you of the supreme importance of active religious work, of practical Christianity. Intellectuals are tempted in a peculiar way to be satisfied with a cold perfection. Such satisfaction is not Christian. We cannot call ourselves Christians unless we recognize that we must preach the Gospel; that we must go out and labour to bring men and women to Christ. The Kingdom of God is a social ideal. Modern Churchmen cannot stand aloof from international, political, and economic problems. If, as with the Whig Bishops of a century ago, intellectual freedom is joined to a stiff social Conservatism, Christ will not be the gainer. To bring the Gospel into common life, to carry the message and sympathies of Jesus into the factory, the street, the home is an urgent necessity in our age. Let the teaching of the Lord be used to correct misguided enthusiasms; but let it also inspire you with such love of your neighbour that you show active sympathy with his burdens and temptations, and that you strive to rescue him from drink, drudgery, disease, despair. Such considerations lead me to be so bold as to make a suggestion to your committee. No religious conference, called in Christ's name, can be entirely sufficient unless it emphasizes the duty of giving. 'Freely ye have received; freely give.' Each year I would like your leaders

to urge those who assemble at your meetings, for their own benefit, to give liberally to some good cause. It were no bad thing that you should set before yourselves a sum impossibly large, and create such an atmosphere of Christian charity that the impossible was attained. Every year you might try to improve on the previous year. Your liberality would thus be the practical measure of your progress in the Christian life. And, if you seek an object of benevolence, no cause more urgently needs support than the endeavour to provide properly trained ministers of our Church. Could you provide Ripon Hall with such funds that no boy of suitable gifts, however poor, was prevented from receiving both a good preliminary education and a training within its walls? Your union excites widespread sympathy. Teach your friends, for their own sakes and for Christ's sake, to give more than they think they can afford, to spread faith in Christ throughout our land.

*HOLY COMMUNION.**

We in Him, and He in us,
dwelling now and evermore,
God and Man united thus
with the Faithful we adore.

With the Faithful—and beyond
deepest depth and highest height
Spirits each to each respond,
Finite unto Infinite:

through the Christ, whose Body we
build, and bless, and break, and eat,
meekly kneeling, lovingly,
here before the Mercy-seat.

He in us, and we in Him,
dwelling now and evermore,
with the radiant Cherubim
God in glory we adore.

R. W. M.

* This poem was read by its author on the last evening of the Conference, and many, who heard it, requested its publication.—Ed., *M.C.*

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